

Lyme Public Hall Newsletter



The Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc.

Vol. 11, No. 1 Spring 2012

New Exhibit to Feature Lyme Architecture

Planning the annual July fourth exhibits at the Lyme Public Hall has many facets. First is choosing a theme and time period. *Threads of Lyme*, the 2010 exhibit, focused on women's cultural contributions to Lyme society featuring wonderful quilts and textiles from Lyme collections. The 2011 exhibit, *Basic Ingredients*, explored Lyme foodways and Lyme kitchens from 1880-1920. The success of our exhibits depends on extensive research and loans from Lyme residents as well as materials in the Lyme Local History Archives which, in turn, benefits from the research and information gathered for each exhibit. For instance, there is now the beginning of an inventory of 19th century Lyme quilts and textiles as well as information about local food traditions and Lyme cookbook authors.

The July 2012 exhibit theme is *Lyme in Detail: Architectural Features of Lyme Homes*. The exhibit will incorporate photographs, drawings, maps, blueprints, and house research from Lyme residents and the Archives. Whether your home dates from the 18th century or is more modern, please share with us its history, and the architectural features or design details that you most enjoy. Your photographs, drawings, house histories and memories of your favorite details will help document this interesting part of Lyme's architectural history. *Please send material to the Lyme Public Hall Assn at P.O. Box 1056, Lyme, CT 06371 or email Mary Juillet-Paonessa at ctquiltworks@aol.com*. No materials, comments, names or addresses will be used without permission. Help document and preserve Lyme's architectural history.



This latch is a favorite of owners of a 18th century home in Sterling City as are the red spots added to decorate the walls



A stained glass window originally destined for a 19th century addition to the Lyme Congregational Church. Windows will be featured in the July 4th exhibit.

Parker Lord Receives Hiram Maxim II Award

On June 9, 2011 at the annual meeting of the Lyme Public Hall Association Parker Lord was honored with the Hiram P. Maxim II Lyme Heritage Preservation Award. First selectmen Ralph Eno and Steve Mattson made their way through a very stormy night to present the award to Parker on behalf of the Town of Lyme and the LPHA.

The Town of Lyme and the Lyme Public Hall Association created this award in 2008 to commemorate Hiram P. Maxim II, the Lyme town historian from 1995 to 2008. The award honors individuals who, like Hiram Maxim, have made significant contributions to preserving

Lyme's cultural heritage. This is only the second time that the award has been given out. The first recipient was Carolyn Bacdayan in 2008.

Parker Lord, who is also a selectman for the Town of Lyme, has been at the forefront of preserving Lyme's cultural heritage. Since 1995, inspired by Hiram Maxim, he has spearheaded the restoration and repair of Lyme's neglected cemeteries. Lord served on the board of the Lyme Public Hall Association from 1997 to 2007 and was president for six years encouraging programs and projects to further appreciation of Lyme's history



Bill Denow, Parker Lord, Tom Davies, and Jim Beers at work restoring the Selden Cemetery in Lyme



Ralph Eno, Lyme's first selectman, congratulates Parker Lord

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Questions? Comments? Email the Lyme Public Hall Association at lymepublichall@att.net

For the latest information on events, check www.lymepublichall.org

Membership in the Lyme Public Hall Association is open to anyone with an interest in the Lyme community. The Association receives no town funding and is supported through tax deductible membership fees, donations, and fund raisers. We invite you to join. The membership year runs from May 1-April 30. Select the support level that works best for you. Make checks payable to Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc and remit to P.O. Box 1056, Lyme, CT 06371.

Supporting - \$15

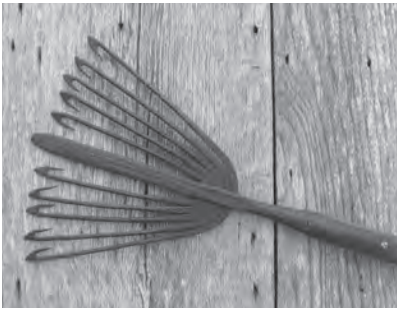
Subscribing - \$25

Contributing - \$50

Sustaining - \$100

Additional donations of cash, appreciated securities, or future bequests are also welcome. Thank you for your continued support. To join our e-mail list for notice of upcoming Lyme Public Hall events, send a request to: lymepublichall@att.net

The Foodways of Lyme: Recollections, Recipes, and Local Ingredients



These “tools” owned by Lyme residents were special eel spears, mementoes of another time when they were used in Connecticut River marshlands and tributaries like the Eight Mile River.

The 2011 Lyme Public Hall exhibit *Basic Ingredients* explored Lyme food traditions from 1880-1920. Local waterways yielded clams, blue fish, eel, and shad. Berries and game were found in the woods. These local ingredients were readily available and prepared using recipes handed down through generations. Steamship traffic on the Connecticut River and later railroads had an impact on what was available in local stores.

Research for the exhibit and recollections of Lyme residents brought to light many interesting facts about local ingredients and recipes. In the diary of Elizabeth Alice Ely and the teenage journal of Isabel Ely Lord (b.1871), we found references to local favorites: shad recipes, turtle soups, game stews, canning and cookie making. Recollections of clam bakes, Thanksgiving celebrations, tea parties, molasses candy and ice cream were recorded. We also located cookbooks and recipes which we compared to other cookbooks of the same era to determine whether recipes were truly local or widely distributed by the popular publications of the time. Interviews with longtime residents revealed some interesting recipes surely not commonly eaten elsewhere! (Raccoon stew?) While we touched on the growth of the changing American cuisine in its social context the information always circled back to relate broader research materials to the context of food ways in Lyme.

Thanks go to Lyme families who loaned antique kitchen equipment and treasures such as eel spears and vintage cookbooks to the exhibit. The East Haddam Historical Society loaned unique tableware and tools and Roger Dill delivered a 19th century wood-burning cook stove used by his family. One longtime resident lent us canned fruit and vegetables saved from an ancestor

providing physical evidence of the importance of new scientific techniques for preserving food safely. Looking at those glass jars one could still decipher what each jar held. Although the exhibit organizers did their best to present an accurate view of the researched information, the exhibit was only a tantalizing introduction to Lyme foodways.

Wednesday August 10, 1887

Lucy and I went up on the ledges after the work was done and worked, read, and wrote. We also discovered a great spot where we picked and ate blueberries . . . Rowed awhile, then Lucy and I went huckleberrying, but we picked more blackberries than huckleberries.

From the diary of sixteen year old Isabel Ely Lord who continued her interest in food and household management as an adult, publishing popular cookbooks and works on household management as well as editing works by Carl Sandburg and Margaret Mead.

HUCKLEBERRIES

A favorite for pie. They are less sweet than blueberries. A rich filling is made by adding to 3 cups berries, 1 cup sugar mixed with 3 tablespoons flour, then 2/3 cup cream.

From *Everybody's Cookbook*, edited by Isabel Ely Lord, Copyright 1925, page 593



Civil War Update

Last June LPHA hosted a presentation by Jim Beers on the Civil War and Lyme's involvement. Since we are presently in the 150th anniversary of that conflict, a follow up interview with Jim is warranted regarding significant events in 1862.

LPH: One of the significant battles of 1862 was at Antietam on September 17. What are some of the interesting aspects of that event?

Jim: The battle was necessary to block General Lee's first invasion of the North. The Union General McClellan, by the 16th, had moved to the northeast of Sharpsburg, Maryland and prepared to engage Lee. An interesting aside is that the naming of the battle was different depending which side you were on, the Confederate Army generally used the nearest town (Battle of Sharpsburg) and the Union Army used a significant body of water, usually a river (Battle of Antietam for the creek that ran through the battlefield).

LPH: How did the battle develop?

Jim: The battle was a one day battle and it was fought in three phases. Early on the morning of the 17th, the Union Army's General Hooker attacked in an area known as Miller's cornfield. Artillery was used on both sides, in some cases firing point blank into infantry formations. Fighting was down to hand to hand. Casualties were tremendous, including a wounded General Hooker. Due to artillery and rifle fire, General Hooker commented that the corn looked as if it had been cut by a scythe. Despite heavy casualties, the Union Army actually gained the advantage, causing a weakness in the Confederate line. But due to General McClellan's persistent timidity to maneuver, Union troops did not exploit the weakness and General Lee (a master at maneuver) was able to reinforce the line and prevent a further Union advance. Between both armies the casualties were 13,000 for the morning battle.

Jim: By noon, the battle had shifted to an area in the center of the Confederate line, known as the Sunken Lane, soon to be called Bloody Lane. Confederate General D. H. Hill



Dunker Church on the other side of Miller's cornfield, scene of the morning battle.

forces occupied a strong defensive position, atop a gradual ridge, in a sunken road worn down by years of wagon traffic, which formed a natural trench 800 yards long. Repeated frontal attacks on this trench were repulsed, resulting in tremendous Union casualties. Union forces finally out flanked the position and were able to fire down the lane, turning it into a deadly trap. In the confusion of battle, the Confederate commander in the Sunken Lane ordered his troops to redress line to counter this threat. The order was interpreted as "Retreat" or by the army word "Skedaddle". The Confederate troops fled the lane with the Union forces in hot pursuit. A hastily assembled artillery barrage by the Confederate General Longstreet prevented a total breach of the Confederate center line. And again, General McClellan's persistent reluctance to maneuver, allowed another opportunity to split the



Bloody Lane

Confederate forces slip away. Between both armies the casualties were 5,600 for the mid-day battle.

Jim: In the afternoon, Union General Burnside launched an attack against the Confederates southern position at Rohrbach's Bridge, now known as Burnside's Bridge. Antietam Creek separated the armies at this southern flank with the Confederate forces commanding high ground on the west side of the creek. The road leading to the bridge paralleled the creek exposed the Union troops to sniper and artillery fire. Repeated assaults of the bridge, which included the 11th Connecticut, wore down the Confederate defenders, and coupled with a crossing at Snavely's Ford of Union forces, Confederate forces withdrew. Union forces, low on ammunition and depleted by casualties did not pursue the Confederate troops. General McClellan's continued reluctance to maneuver, in this case not reinforcing once the bridge was crossed, allowed Confederate General A. P. Hill's division to reinforce the southern flank and prevent any further Union advance.

Jim: Between both armies the 22,700 casualties, 3654 dead, remains to this day as the largest loss for a single day military battle in American history.

LPH: You mentioned the 11th Connecticut, what was the relationship of the 11th to Lyme?



Burnside's Bridge, site of the afternoon battle.

Jim: Many times we hear that during the war that families fought families from opposing sides, that is true here. Henry Kingsbury, the commander of the 11th Connecticut, received his appointment to West Point from Lyme. He graduated from West Point in 1861 as a 2nd Lt, and due to the demands of war for professional soldiers, made rapid progress through the ranks. By April 25, 1862 he was promoted to Colonel 11th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry regiment. Henry was mortally wounded during the assault on Burnside's Bridge. The irony here is that the Confederate Commander of the forces opposing Henry's 11th was his brother-in-law General D R Jones. When Jones was made aware of Henry's death, he was so distraught that he resigned his commission, returned to North Carolina and died of heart failure five months after the battle.

Jim: Also serving in the 11th was Capt. J. D. Griswold, A Company commander, from Old Lyme. Capt Griswold was killed while leading his men in the assault on Burnside's Bridge. His remains were buried in an Old Lyme cemetery. I'm not aware of any other local men that may have been casualties at Antietam.

LPH: As a follow-up to Kingsbury's death, Henry died September 18, 1862 at Rohrbach Farm, Sharpsburg, MD, buried at Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, DC with a cenotaph in the North Lyme Cemetery, Hamburg, CT.

LPH: What is the significance of the battle of Antietam at this point in the Civil War?

Jim: Strategically it was a victory for the Union Army because it did stop General Lee's invasion of the North, with the Confederate withdrawal south of the Potomac River. Politically it provided President Lincoln positive reinforcement to issue the Emancipation Proclamation which was issued on September 22, 1862, taking effect on January 1, 1863. Diplomatically Lincoln's proclamation had influence in dissuading France and Great Britain from recognizing the Confederacy.

Lyme Local History Archives

The Local History Archives continues to grow in the use and richness of its collections. One of the accessions in 2010 was several banker's boxes of files containing primary sources, genealogical research and manuscripts about Lyme history and its people which the late Elizebeth Bull Plimpton, former Municipal Historian for Lyme (1985-1993), had collected, researched or written over the years. Betty, like Elizabeth Putnam and Hiram Maxim, is well remembered for her work to promote an appreciation of Lyme history. Ken Plimpton, Betty's husband, made this donation which is a valuable resource because of the breadth and detail of the subject matter and coverage of all sections of town.

Another accession was a set of 48 rare, glass plate negatives (4½"x5½"), a form of photography that was a significant advance in photographic technology in its time (late 19th to early 20th century). This was the work of Gilbert Bill Sterling (1872-1942), a native son from Bill Hill, depicting people, homes and landscapes in Sterling City, Bill Hill and other areas of Lyme in the late 19th century. Thank you, Ken, for this donation as well.

Most requests for information and for research visits have come from Lyme residents and organizations, but also from Old Lyme, East Lyme, East Haddam, Stonington, Old Saybrook, New Haven, Indiana, Ohio, California and Washington state. Patrons also come by referral from neighboring historical societies and libraries.

The public also met the Archives through publications and exhibits this year. More than a dozen historical ads of Lyme entrepreneurs from the Local History Archives were used in "*The Charm of the Place, Old Lyme in the 1920s*" recently published by the Old Lyme Historical Society. Images and historical information were used again for the town's 2011 Annual Report, in Lyme Land Trust newsletters, a privately printed memoir, and in news media during the local drive to save the Hadlyme-Chester Ferry. The Public Hall's July 4th exhibit, *Basic Ingredients: Kitchens of Lyme 1880-1920* made use of photographs, personal histories, diaries, account books, oral history and artifacts from the Archives. In addition four table-top displays were created for the Lyme Public

Library by the archives committee featuring materials from the Archives.

As in any specialized activity, there is a need to stay current with best practices. The volunteer archivist and archives committee members have attended four in-service seminars and workshops in the past two years on topics from paper preservation (photographs, books, manuscripts) to disaster planning. Our participation was made possible and affordable through the Lyme Public Hall's membership in the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations. We also benefited from the Archives' multiyear participation in "Conservation ConneCTion", a program for small archives and museums funded through a federal grant to the Connecticut State Library. Both programs included site visits to the Archives by conservation specialists. Every workshop and site visit stimulates new activity for the dedicated Archives crew!

A dedicated room for the Lyme Local History Archives is part of the plan for the proposed Lyme Town Campus Center. This location would enhance visibility and awareness of this unique asset, provide convenient public access for its use, and very importantly, the appropriate kind of space for processing and storage in the proper climate for preservation. We appreciate the recognition of the value and usefulness of the Archives to the town and hope for a successful completion of the Lyme Town Campus Center.

For information about donations of material, volunteer assistance and research at the Archives, contact Carolyn Bacdayan 860-434-9292. Open hours 10 a.m.-noon Tuesdays or by appointment.

*Grateful appreciation is extended to
the Essex Savings Bank and its Community
Investment Program for support of the
Lyme Public Hall Association.*

Upcoming Programs 2012

Earth Day Weekend, April 21 and 22

Lyme Spring Clean-Sweep

Annual town-wide roadside clean-up. Free trash bags are available at H.L.Reynold's (Jane's) Store and the Hadlyme Country Store. Town of Lyme will pick up bags left on side of road.

Thursday, June 14, 6 p.m.

Annual Meeting & Community Potluck Dinner

Shore Grass, A Connecticut Blue Grass Band

In its early days the Public Hall had a tradition of musical events, this year's annual meeting program revives that tradition. Shore Grass presents a lively mix of traditional bluegrass, old-time, early country, gospel and folk songs including Civil War era music. The event is free and open to the public.

Sunday, June 24, 2 p.m.

Lyme and the Battle of Antietam: A Presentation and Cemetery Tour

This year is the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest single-day battle in American history. Lyme resident Jim Beers will discuss this Civil War battle, its consequences and how Lyme soldiers were involved. The presentation will be followed by a tour of Antietam related graves in the North Lyme Cemetery.

Week of July 4th

Exhibit: *Lyme in Detail: Architectural Features of Lyme Homes*

Free and open to the public. See article on page 1. Further details about opening hours will be available on the LPHA website.

Saturday, August 4, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Annual Tag & Bake Sale

A bargain hunter's delight! Set aside your donations for this fundraiser: furniture, tools, small appliances, house wares, linen, toys, decorative, and gift items. For drop off dates go to www.lymepublichall.org

Saturday, September 15, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Historic Quilts Workshop

In this day-long workshop Mary Juliet-Paonessa and Susan Jerome of CTQuiltWorks will teach a variety of antique quilt patterns including patterns found in 19th century Lyme family quilts. Fee includes instruction, lunch and patterns. For enrollment or more information, email abru@comcast.net.

Sunday, September 23, 2 p.m.

The Nehantics: Residents of Lyme for the last 3,000 years

Anthropologist Dr. John Pfeiffer will give an overview of Nehantic history, from before the arrival of European settlers, through their impressment by the British into service in the French and Indian Wars, the creation of a reserve on Black Point, and the eventual breakup of the community. Mohegans, rivals of the Nehantics, will be part of this story. Mohegans, particularly Uncas and Joshua, gave their names to Lyme locations.

Sunday, October 14, 2 p.m.

How Old Is that Photograph in the Family Album?

Have you ever wondered how old that faded picture of great grandmother really is? Join nationally-known photography expert and Hadlyme resident Matthew Isenburg for a fascinating talk about determining the age of photographs. His presentation will offer a peek into one of the largest collections of daguerreotypes and other early images, cameras, and photo equipment in private hands.

Saturday, November 10, 5-7 p.m.

The Lyme Public Hall's Traditional Chowder Dinner

Join us for this delicious Hall tradition, featuring homemade corn chowder, clam chowder, cole slaw, breads, and apple crisp. Adults \$12. Children under 12 \$8.

Look for displays based on the collections of the Lyme Local History Archives at the Lyme Library in February, April, July and November,

These displays are developed by the Archives Committee of the LPHA.

For more information visit:

www.lymepublichall.org



THE LYME PUBLIC HALL
Historical Organization and Archives
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 Lyme, CT 06371

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The Lyme Public Hall Association is dedicated to the appreciation of Lyme's history, culture, and community through the preservation and use of the historic hall, its archives, and historical programs.

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LPHA and Lyme Land Conservation Trust Collaborate on Toxics Talk

On a chilly February afternoon, about 50 people gathered at the Lyme Public Hall to hear Dr. Gary Ginsberg discuss how we can live healthier, “greener” lives. Dr. Ginsberg, a toxicologist at the CT Department of Public Health and the co-author of *What's Toxic, What's Not*, has appeared on national TV shows and has his own radio show devoted to the topic.

Did you know that 80% of the fertilizer you apply to your lawn ends up either in our groundwater or running off and eventually entering Long Island Sound? Or that many of the products used in plastics may inhibit male development? How about that our greatest exposure to pesticides comes not from supermarket produce, but from our own application of materials on our properties? Dr. Ginsberg filled the audience in on these facts, as well as debunking many popular myths regarding pollution in our homes and environment. The take-away message was to use

products that are naturally derived, that are packaged in materials that do not contain BPA, and to use the least amount possible to do the job.

The Lyme Public Hall Association was pleased to co-sponsor this program with the Lyme Land Conservation

Trust. Together we work to preserve both the natural and historical resources of our unique community. For more information on Dr. Ginsberg and tips for greener living, go to www.whatstoxic.org.

