

Lyme Public Hall Newsletter



The Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc.

Vol.5, No. 1

Spring 2006



20th Anniversary Open House A NIGHT of MEMORIES

It was a full house last November 6 when people came out to reminisce and join in the celebration of our 20th year of activity as the Lyme Public Hall Association operating as an historical organization in our renovated 1887 building.



Many in the crowd could remember the sad state of the Hall back in 1985 when the association assumed caretaker status from the Town. To them especially, it was a pleasure to recall the changes that have taken place over the years. Among those changes, some of the newer ones are fresh interior paint, new window treatments, and the new "everyone accessible" first floor restroom.

For those who were not around twenty years ago, there was plenty to see— "Save the Hall" bumper stickers, T-shirts, program flyers, and other memorabilia from earlier fund-raising endeavors. Unidentified photos of youngsters from *Christmas Past* were posted in hopes of establishing identifications for posterity. Additionally, select items from our local history archives were on display as a sampling of the Archives' success and growth since its dedication in 1997.

A hit with everyone was a running photo retrospective showing people and scenes from the last twenty years of LPH activity. A variety of snacks, anniversary cake, and beverages added to the pleasure of the evening.

A special treat was the introduction of Doris "Doad" Jewett's newly published memoir titled *Things Remembered*. (For more about the book, see page 3.) In her new role as author, Doad herself was the star attraction as she personally autographed briskly selling copies of her book.



Counter clockwise from top: Photo show; Good eats; Author Doad Jewett and reader Tedi Cavicke; Anniversary cake; Lyme Town Historian Hiram Maxim and Marta Cone



Last spring the Hall received a generous gift from the *Lyme Garden Club* to be spent for landscaping purposes. Towards bringing this exciting endeavor to fruition, our committee is presently working with landscape architect *Sarah McCracken* to develop a plan that will be both pleasing and have lasting impact on the appearance of the Hall. They are hopeful of incorporating into the plan outside steps that will make it easier for folks to get from the lower level to the upper level.

At the same time, the board is considering other changes to the front of the building that, though still in keeping with the history of the building, will provide a fresh look, improved access, and abate moisture problems in the lower level.



Cows proved to be a popular subject in our picture postcard contest held last spring in conjunction with our Independence Day weekend exhibit, *Keeping in Touch*. Lyme scenes suitable for postcards were submitted by children in grades K-5. Each of the five winners received packages of real postcards made from their photos.

Grand prize winner *Sam Winter* entered a photo of a large tree in his yard that's known as "Peter's Tree" — planted some 90 years ago in honor of Yale trained physician Peter Burr whose family occupied, for many generations, the home where Sam now lives. Landscape photos were entered by prize winners *Alexis Thornton* and *Harry Godfrey-Fogg*. *Chelsea Evankow* and *Julia Strycharz* each entered delightful portraits of Tiffany Farm cows. All entries have been added to our local history archives to help document life in Lyme 2005 for future generations.



In the works: A proposed facelift for our 1887 building as envisioned by architect Mac Godley.



Grand prize winner 8-year old Sam Winter with his postcards. Upper left: "Allie the Cow" by Chelsea Ann Evankow. Upper right: "Moo" by Julia Strycharz.

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 note to: lymepublichall@adelphia.net



How does one remove the nearly 1300 bones from a shad fish to make it fit to eat? It's clear that the folks above were interested in knowing as they gathered around *Dot Goss*, aka *The Shad Lady*, last April to see her technique. In addition to the demonstration, Mrs. Goss showed the documentary *A Passion for Shad* and spoke of her personal experiences in the shad fishing industry.



In the spirit of historical times, ladies of the Hall held a sewing bee in September. Under the capable direction of *Angie Falstrom* and *Wendy Hill* they met the challenge of swags and jabots that now dress the windows and match the elegance of the chandeliers in the Hall's main room. Combined with the recent paint job, our humble little building has become a welcoming place—spruced up and ready for a full calendar of community events or private affairs.



Last Fall when it was time to go to work in earnest on our "almost traditional" chowder supper, we realized that our volunteer cooks and kitchen expertise from suppers past had stepped down! And with no cooks in the kitchen, there *was* no chowder supper. It was time to regroup!

Community dinners have been a large part of the Hall's history and we hope to not lose this tradition.

With new expertise in the kitchen, on Sunday, March 19, we attempted an old fashioned Ham & Beans dinner. A hungry crowd, our diners were served family-style at Lyme history themed tables.

We know that no one went away hungry. And judging by the looks of the congenial table mates above, *we got it right!*



Civil War enthusiast *Jim Beers* was dressed for the part in October as he presented a program in which he shared his enthusiasm and considerable knowledge of American Civil War uniforms, weapons, organization, tactics, battles, and leaders. On display were artifacts and reproductions from his personal collection.



Things Remembered

by

Doris "Doad" Reynolds Jewett

"Too good to stay in the family" was the consensus of several locals who had the opportunity to read *Doris "Doad" Jewett's* manuscript penned for the purpose of educating her grandchildren about the "old days." Lyme Town Historian, *Hiram Maxim*, who took on the task of adding photos, also personally donated the cost of the initial print run. The result is a delightful read, full of humor, high spirits and even a little irreverence about growing up in Lyme in the early 1900s. Doad is donating the entire proceeds of the sale of the \$12 book to the Lyme Public Hall. The book is available at Hall events or by calling 434-1929.

Although transformed into a house, the one-room schoolhouse on Sterling City Road where *Doad Jewett* began her teaching career is still standing. In a recent renovation, present day owners *Linda and Alan Barkley* uncovered evidence of the building's former life. Left for posterity's sake—no doubt by school children with overly busy hands and a mischievous bent—were initials carved in the wainscoting. One set in particular stands out: *LHT*. It's believed to be the 1910's handiwork of a young *Leon Hammond Tiffany*, father of *Jack Tiffany*, the present day "keeper" of Tiffany Farms.



Independence Day 2005 Exhibit

Keeping in Touch



“Keeping in touch” is a phrase that strikes a chord with any generation. But how best to do it? The exhibit over the 2005 Independence Day weekend drew an attentive audience to inspect and enjoy what Lymers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries did with letters, post cards and photographs.

On entering the Hall, the visitors saw a glimmering sea of post cards spread out over long tables with hundreds of views of Hamburg, Hadlyme, Brockway’s Ferry and points in between, with greetings or “instant messages” to be delivered by the post office the same day or the next. Many of the cards were produced by Lyme’s own storekeepers using photographs by local residents; some printed in Germany where lithography was more advanced. The brightly colored and fanciful greeting cards that were displayed were part of the extremely popular new mode of sharing greetings, facilitated by the U.S. government establishing a post office department and then allowing private mailing cards in 1898. The amazing number and variety of cards were made possible by the loan or donation of postcards to the archives by *Bill Hawthorne, Jane DeWolf, Elizabeth Putnam, Sara Denow, Parker Lord, Ethel Feltham, and Suzie Brown.*



The fact that there were several post offices in homes or stores within the town of Lyme simultaneously for many years was especially intriguing, even more so that there were current photographs of these former sites which are still residences today.

The extremely popular mode of keeping in touch with friends and family with personal photographic portraits mounted on cardboard as “cartes-de-visite” and cabinet cards produced bulging albums for Lyme families. While it is unfortunate that many of the individuals in these photographs are unidentified, the poses and studio backdrops, the hair and dress, the representation of the professions and the personal greetings and dedications tell their own story of style for the late 19th century in Lyme. Some were charmers, some maybe dandies, and probably quite a few were in love.



*Top to bottom: Visitors inspecting vintage postcard views of Lyme; Friends **Adi Giesey** and **Bridget Nelson** showing off their sparkly July 4th spirit; The venerable rural mailbox—bearer of tidings from near and far.*



**LYME PUBLIC HALL
LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVES**

Papers and Collections

The more than 3,500 items now preserved in the archives are organized into collections identified with the name of the individual, family or organization that the collection is about or created by. Where there are just a few items or a single item in a donation, these may be grouped with items of a similar type (photographs, manuscript, etc.). In addition there are small collections of art, artifacts, audio/video tapes, and books.

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|---|--|
| <i>Beebe: William Beebe
Genealogical Collection</i> | <i>Oral History Collection</i> |
| <i>Ely Family Papers</i> | <i>Pamphlets/Booklets</i> |
| <i>Emerson: Trudy Emerson
Collection</i> | <i>Photograph Collection</i> |
| <i>Ferry: Chamberlain Ferry Papers</i> | <i>Pierson Family Papers</i> |
| <i>First Congregational Church of
Lyme Records</i> | <i>Plimpton: Elizebeth B. Plimpton
Historical Collection</i> |
| <i>Grassy Hill Congregational
Church Records</i> | <i>Post Card Collection</i> |
| <i>Hamburg Fair Collection</i> | <i>Putnam: Elizabeth Putnam
Historical Collection</i> |
| <i>Harding: Sylvoia Daniels Harding
Papers</i> | <i>Putnam Newspaper Collection</i> |
| <i>Jewett: Doris Reynolds Jewett
Papers</i> | <i>Raymond and Bill Families:
Genealogical Collection</i> |
| <i>Knights of Pythias Records</i> | <i>Reynolds Family Papers</i> |
| <i>Ledgers and Journals</i> | <i>Reynolds: Margaret Reynolds
Newspaper Columns</i> |
| <i>Lord Family Papers</i> | <i>School: One Room Schools</i> |
| <i>Lyme Grange #147 Collection</i> | <i>Stark Family</i> |
| <i>Lyme Organization Newsletters</i> | <i>Sterling: Mary Sterling Bakke
Papers</i> |
| <i>Lyme Public Hall Records</i> | <i>Sterling: John Randall Sterling
Papers</i> |
| <i>Lyme Town Reports</i> | <i>Sutton Family Papers</i> |
| <i>Main Street News: Lyme
Supplements</i> | <i>Webster: Photographs by
Winifred Webster</i> |
| <i>Manuscript Collection</i> | <i>World War I and II Collection</i> |
| <i>Map Collection</i> | |
| <i>Newspaper Clippings
1997 onward</i> | |



Our local history archives are housed in a climate controlled room which is used for both materials processing and for study. Professional archival standards are used in caring for all items. In this way, our treasured materials are preserved and made accessible as historical resources for everyone.

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Many hands help in various ways in the Archives. In 2005, the assistance of the following volunteers was greatly appreciated: *David Brubaker, Mary Catherwood, Lou Condron, Toni Condron, Ethel Feltham, Wendy Hill, Doad Jewett, Diana Lord, Hilde Reichenbach*

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The Archives is in need of a volunteer to transcribe tapes of oral history interviews. Can you help?

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The Archives is interested in collecting and/or scanning photos of the Hall throughout the years and events—public or private—held at the Hall. Do you have photos to share?

Life on the Farm: Facts & Fancy

Independence Day 2006 Exhibit

The exhibit being planned for this summer's Independence Day weekend at the Hall will focus on Lyme farms and farm life—past and present. It will provide an opportunity to explore the question "What is fact and what is fancy?" about the history of farms and farm life in Lyme. It will be a multi-media exhibit featuring materials loaned by individuals in the community and from the Hall's local history archives—contemporary and historical paintings and photos, video histories, artifacts, farm journals and farm family diaries as well as farmers!

If you have items that you'd like to share, please contact Carolyn Bacdayan, 434-9292.

Mission: To collect, document, preserve and make accessible the historical heritage of Lyme.

The Archives depends on donations of items of historical significance to Lyme, cash, supplies and equipment as well as the help of our many volunteers. Before disposing of materials with a connection to Lyme, please think of the Archives.

The Archives are open by appointment. For information about using the Archives, donating materials, volunteering, or making a financial contribution, please contact Carolyn Bacdayan, Archivist (860) 434-9292.

Lyme Olde Tymes

By Carolyn Bacdayan

The recent discovery at the Lyme Town Hall of The Public Hall Association's secretary/treasurer's journal for the years of 1887-1955 has provided a window into some entertaining social history for Lyme. Believe it or not, things were hopping in Hamburg in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Dances were by far the favorite recreation. Beginning with a big dance for the dedication of the new Public Hall on Thanksgiving in 1887, at least two dances were sponsored by the Hall every year thereafter, usually at Thanksgiving and Christmas. In many years there were also dances to celebrate Summer, New Year's Eve and even Washington's Birthday. Additionally, the lads and lasses and gentle folk could look forward to being invited to one or more of the many private "socials" for which the Hall was rented by individuals. Logically, so many dances generated several "dance schools" conducted by private individuals, complete with their own final dances and receptions.

And what would a dance be without freshly churned ice cream? One of the Hall's earliest purchases was hand-cranked freezers. Imagine every-one arriving with quarts of raw cream to be combined and churned for events called "Dance with Cream", "Dance & Supper with Cream", or "Cream & Cake". Undoubtedly, ice stored in the ice houses around Hamburg Cove was used to pack the freezers.

Prior to 1921, all activities at the Hall took place without the benefit of electricity, running water or central heat. Electric lights were installed in 1921 – with a monthly charge of \$1 until 1948. Indoor running water and heat were not installed until after World War II in 1947.

Here's a sampling of other activities—in addition to dances—that filled the years:

- 1887—Hall Dedication
- 1889—New Year's Eve Oyster Supper
 - Lecture: Spiritualism Exposed
- 1892—Magic Lantern Show
 - The Hotchkiss Sisters Bell Ringers
 - Winston Troupe
- 1895—Reading by Miss Luce
- 1896—The Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company
 - Chrysanthemum Show
- 1901—Winter Whist Club (a card game)
- 1907—Hadlyme Cornet Band
 - Glass Blower Demonstration
- 1911—Bible Drama
 - Democratic Rally
- 1915—Equal Suffrage League Benefit
- 1917—Dancing Classes by Mrs. William Marvin
- 1920—Alice Reynolds Musicals

Archaeology at Griswold Point

Monday, April 3, 7 p.m.

Harold Juli, archaeologist and professor of anthropology at Connecticut College will show slides and talk about discoveries made during two summers of research to uncover archaeological remains of prehistoric Native American structures on the Hillhouse property at Griswold Point in Old Lyme. Professor Juli will describe the findings and interpret the remains within the context of what is known about the late prehistoric Southern New England native American village form and function.

Griswold Point and the surrounding area at the mouth of the Connecticut River, granted to Matthew Griswold in 1645, was an early settlement in the English Colony of Saybrook. Today the barrier beach at the western end of the point is preserved as a nature sanctuary with limited public access.

Admission free. Open to the public.



Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner

Beaver Brook Farm

Thursday, June 9, 6 p.m.

Following a community potluck dinner and brief annual meeting, *Suzanne Sankow* will talk about the history of Beaver Brook Farm and the adaptations the Sankows have undertaken for the farm to succeed in the 21st century. The 175 acre family farm began as a dairy farm in 1917. Today the expanding farm is home to more than 600 sheep, a dozen Jersey dairy cows, a wool shop and farm market.

Bring a main course, salad or dessert to share for the dinner. Open to the public.

Save these Dates

For more info or to assist with these or future events, call Wendy Hill, 434-2961

Monday, April 3, 7 p.m.

Harold Juli, Archaeology at Griswold Point

See details on page 6.

Earth Day Weekend, April 22-23

Lyme Spring Clean-Sweep

Town-wide roadside clean-up. Free trash bags available at H.L. Reynold's (Jane's) store and Hadlyme Country Store. On Monday, Town of Lyme picks up bags left on side of road.

Sunday, April 23, 1 p.m.

Robert Thorson, Stone Walls of New England

See details on page 8.

Thursday, June 9, 6 p.m.

Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner

Suzanne Sankow, Beaver Brook Farm

See details on page 6.

Independence Day Weekend, July 1-4

Exhibit: Life on the Farm: Facts & Fancy

See details on page 5.

Saturday, August 5, time to be announced

Tag & Bake Sale

A bargain hunter's delight. Set aside your donations for this fund raiser: furniture, tools, small appliances, house wares, linens, toys, decorative and gift items.

Thursday, September 28, 7 p.m.

Harold Juli, Life in Rural Mexico

Archaeologist Harold Juli will present slides and talk about his current research in rural Mexico unearthing the archaeology of a hacienda occupied from 1577-1946. Admission free.

Saturday, October 21, 9 a.m. – Noon

River Cruise to Selden Creek

A morning cruise from Hamburg Cove through Selden Creek onboard the *RiverQuest* excursion boat. Coffee and light brunch provided. \$35 members / \$40 non-members Call Angie Falstrom at 434-3194 to reserve a space on this trip.

Sunday, November 12, 2 p.m.

Tiffany Farms: Past, Present & Future

Jack Tiffany will present the history of his family run farm and discuss the adjustments to modern demands and innovative technologies adopted by the farm in order to succeed as a dairy farm in the 21st century. Admission free.

Having a special event?

- a reception, exhibit, program, party, or even a tag sale? The Lyme Public Hall can accommodate a variety of activities and may be just the place to host your occasion.

Rent all or part of the building. The assembly room seats 140 for lectures, or, with the tables set up, 65 for dinner. For smaller groups, there is the meeting room.

Renting the basement for a tag sale - with 2 garage doors facing the street - is a real bargain.

For fees and availability, please call Eleanor O'Connell at 434-7715.

Lyme Farm Picture Contest

In conjunction with this year's Independence Day exhibit, the Lyme Public Hall is sponsoring a children's art contest. Children in grades preK-5 are invited to create and submit pictures of Lyme inspired farm scenes using their medium of choice. All entries will be displayed in the *Life on the Farm: Facts & Fancy* Independence Day weekend exhibit held at the Hall. Top winning entries will be made into sets of real note cards for their creators' own use. Other prizes will be awarded. Entry forms will be distributed in Lyme School and are also available at H.L. Reynold's (Jane's) store. Completed entries are to be submitted to classroom teachers or at Jane's store by May 19. Call Wendy Hill, 434-2961, for further info.

Who to contact:

Membership: Diana Lord, 526-1436, banningwood@juno.com

Programs: Wendy Hill, 434-2961, whir@ctol.net

Archives: Carolyn Bacdayan, 434-9292, bacdayan@aol.com

Rentals: Eleanor O'Connell, 434-7715

Newsletter: Sara Denow, 434-1929, sdenow@adelphia.net

Bequests & Donations: Jack Leonardo, 434-5715, lymack@aol.com

Historical Images of Lyme: Carolyn Bacdayan, 434-9292

Lyme Land Conservation Trust & Lyme Public Hall present:
Stone Walls of New England: History and Conservation

A Talk & Walk with Robert Thorson ~ Sunday, April 23

ROBERT M. THORSON is a professor of geology at the University of Connecticut and co-founder of the Stone Wall Initiative (stonewall.uconn.edu), that supports the appreciation and preservation of historic walls. He is a columnist for *The Hartford Courant* and has authored three popular books on stone walls; *Stone by Stone: The Magnificent History in New England's Stone Walls*, winner of the 2003 Connecticut Book Award for Non-fiction; *Exploring Stone Walls: A Field Guide to New England Stone Walls*; and the award winning illustrated children's book, *Stone Wall Secrets*. The Lyme Public Hall is pleased to join forces with the **Lyme Land Conservation Trust** to co-host the appearance of Professor Thorson for an overview of the cultural and environmental history of stone walls in New England, and an examination of the conservation issues surrounding them.

THE TALK: 1 P.M. at the Hall, followed by a book signing. Refreshments will be served. For information, call Mary Guitar at 434-7285 or Wendy Hill at 434-2961. Reservations are not required to attend the talk.

THE WALK: 3 P.M. at a different location in Lyme, Professor Thorson will lead a guided hike to explore stone walls. Reservations are required to participate in the walk. Space is limited. Call Mary Guitar at 434-7285 to reserve a space and to learn the location of the walk. Please, no dogs.

Both events are free and are supported by the **Rufus Barringer Resource Education and Protection Fund of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust**.



Photo by Carol Davidge

ROBERT M. THORSON

“Woodland stone walls aren't really abandoned: They're busy being artifacts and habitats. So, let's not convert irreplaceable archaeology into cosmetic architecture.”



THE LYME PUBLIC HALL
Historical Organization and Archives
249 Hamburg Road
P.O. Box 1056
Lyme, CT 06371

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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