

Lyme Public Hall Newsletter



The Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc.

Vol. 14, No. 1 Spring 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Greetings from the Board of Directors at the Lyme Public Hall. 2015 is shaping up to be an exciting year for us, and we hope for you too. We have completed the move of the Lyme Local History Archives from the Public Hall to the new library, and plans are underway to develop materials that you can explore to get a better sense of our work. An Archives Open House is planned for May 9, or you can stop by the Library on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon for a visit.

We will also be celebrating the 350th anniversary of the “loving parting” between the Saybrook Colony and what would become Lyme on the east side of the Connecticut River. We have been working with Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, East Lyme and Salem to develop programs that reflect upon the early history of our towns. A proclamation recognizing the anniversary has been signed by the First Selectmen in all five towns, and plans are underway to produce a video presentation about the Loving Parting’s importance. Lyme Public Hall’s programs will focus on the 17th through the 19th centuries as we explore the town’s formative years and the events that were playing out elsewhere in the surrounding area.

In addition, we will also be holding our annual Tag Sale (start putting your goodies aside now) and Chowder Dinner. Besides being lots of fun, these events are important fundraisers for the Lyme Public Hall Association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you in the Lyme community and farther afield for all of your support in 2014.



Lyme selectmen Steve Mattson, Ralph Eno and Parker Lord with the proclamation signed in honor of the 350th anniversary of The Loving Parting, as Rosie looks on.

Whether you are a dues-paying member, a volunteer, or merely enjoy attending our programs, we rely upon you to continue our mission of preserving and promoting the history of our special place. We hope to see you all in 2015!

—Leslie Lewis

Were you in Lyme for the Bi-Centennial Celebration in 1976?

Did you attend the parade or other events that went on that year? If so, we could use your help to identify people and activities in videotapes shot during that time period. If you would be willing to help out with this project, contact Leslie at 860-526-8886.

News from the Lyme Public Hall

The Lyme Public Hall Association has been an active member of the Connecticut League of History Organizations for many years and has benefited from programs and workshops they have offered. Carolyn Bacdayan received an award for individual achievement from the CLHO at their annual meeting on June 2, 2014. This was the only award in the category of individual achievement given by the group this past year.

The citation from the CLHO reads:

Carolyn Bakke Bacdayan of Lyme, Connecticut is being honored for her leadership in establishing the Lyme Local History Archives as an entity of the Lyme Public Hall Association. Through her hard work, dedication, and perseverance, the Archives were established in 1998. In addition to her crucial role in its organization, she has remained dedicated to the cause by volunteering as its unpaid archivist for more than eleven years.

This past year Carolyn received another honor when she was named the official Lyme town historian, following in the footsteps of Hiram Maxim, who was town historian from 1995 to 2008.

Welcome to new board member, Dr. Richard Jones, who joined the LPHA leadership this year. Richard was a senior staff member and later president and chief of staff at Hartford Hospital before retiring in 1998. More important he has a well-stocked tool box and a “can do” attitude.

Thanks go to Jim Beers, who has been sharing his knowledge of Lyme’s involvement in the Civil War for the past five years, in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of



Archivist Carolyn Bacdayan and LPHA Vice-President Bill Denow ready for the Archives move in October 2014

the war. And to Bill Denow who, working with Jim, crafted articles based on Jim’s talks for the LPHA newsletter. Jim’s lecture this year celebrates the 1st Connecticut Cavalry Regiment, its role at the end of the war, and during the surrender at Appomattox.

Who to Contact:

Local History Archives: Carolyn Bacdayan, 860-598-9760,
acbacdayan@sbcglobal.net

Programs: Leslie Lewis, 860-526-8886.

Rentals: Kathy Tisdale, 860-434-1920

Newsletter editors: Leslie Lewis, Ann Brubaker

Writers for this issue: Carolyn Bacdayan, Jim Beers, Ann Brubaker,
Bill Denow, Leslie Lewis

Newsletter layout: Mary Guitar, Justin Marciano

Questions? Comments? Email the Lyme Public Hall Association at info@lymepublichall.org

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: info@lymepublichall.org

The Loving Parting or How We Became Lyme



In 1665, thirty families on the east side of the Connecticut River took the final step necessary to break away from their parent colony, the Saybrook Colony, and form their own “plantation.” The area they settled, known originally as East Saybrook, is

today the towns of Old Lyme, Lyme, East Lyme, and a part of Salem. On February 13, 1665 six representatives of the proposed “plantation” met with five representatives of the Saybrook Colony. They signed a document setting out conditions for the separation and proclaiming the amicable split to be a “loving parting.”

Settlement of the Saybrook Colony started in 1635 around the fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River. By 1648, there were more than 48 English proprietors (or land owners) and a demand for more land. To meet this need, land in the colony that was not yet privately owned was organized into three new settlement areas or quarters, including one on the east side of the Connecticut River. The Connecticut Colony government in Hartford required that in order to form an official “plantation,” there needed to be a “competency of land to entertain thirty families” and the ability of the community to support a minister. Families with land on the east side of the river were able to meet those requirements by 1665. In 1667, the General Assembly in Hartford approved changing the town’s name to Lyme.

Neighborhoods, streets and landmarks in the Town of Lyme still bear the names of some of Lyme’s first thirty families. Richard Ely acquired the property known as Six Mile Island Farm, where Ely Landing and Ely’s Ferry were established, as a result of his second marriage to the sister of George Fenwick, one of the founders of the Saybrook Colony. Wolston Brockway and William Lord also owned large tracts of land that still bear their names. Less familiar are John Tinker and his sons, Amos and

Samuel, who gave their names to Tinkers Lane. Early English settlers are not the only ones whose names survive in Lyme locations. Sachem Attawanhood, the third son of Uncas, the well-known head of the Mohegans, lived in Lyme. Uncas gave this son the English name of Joshua after a son of Edward Colver, an English scout during the Pequot Wars and a friend to Uncas. Attawanhood died in Lyme in 1676 but Joshua Rock and Joshuatown Road remind us of his legacy in Lyme.

The Lyme Public Hall Association is pleased to have joined with the Old Lyme Historical Society, the Old Saybrook Historical Society, the East Lyme Historical Society and the Salem Historical Society to commemorate the 350th anniversary of *The Loving Parting*. Selectmen from the five towns signed a proclamation noting this event, and a video featuring local historians will be produced this Spring.

Are you a descendant of Lyme’s earliest settlers?

The northern part of the new “plantation” of Lyme was settled by the late 1600s. Active in that area were Brockways, Elys, and Lords as well as Joshua, son of the Mohegan sachem Uncas. By the early 1700s members of the Banning, Marvin, Mott, Luther, Niles, Tiffany, Rathbone, and Sterling families had settled in what is now the Town of Lyme. Check the Lyme Public Hall website or call the Archives at 860-598-9760 for a more extensive list of families active in northern Lyme in the 17th century.

Descendants of 17th-century Lyme families are invited to stop by the Lyme Public Hall between 2-5 p.m. on Friday, July 3rd for family group pictures.

The Lyme Local History Archives will keep these photos to document the history of families in our town. For more information, call Leslie Lewis at 860-526-8886.

First Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry 1861–1865

Lyme resident Jim Beers has been sharing his knowledge of the American Civil War for the past four years. His fifth talk this May will focus on the 1st Regiment CVC. Eight men from Lyme served in this unit.



Battle of Five Forks, chromolithograph print by Kurz & Allison, showing a charge led by Union general Philip Sheridan (Library of Congress, public domain)

On October 1, 1861, four-and-a-half months after the start of the Civil War, a call was made statewide for volunteers to form the 1st Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. It was organized by late October as a battalion of four companies with 346 men and officers. Records show that eight Lyme men served in the 1st, though it isn't clear if any were in the initial recruitment. After less than five months of training, the unit was assigned to a brigade in Virginia under General Robert C. Schenck. The 1st CVC patrolled the valley of the South Potomac River, west of the Shenandoah mountains, suppressing rebel guerilla activity.

By early May, Schenck's brigade, under the command of Union General John C. Fremont, moved into the Shenandoah Valley and was engaged by T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson's forces at McDowell, Virginia. Jackson forced Fremont's army to withdraw back into western Virginia. Defensive actions were a key role for the cavalry in the Civil War: The 1st CVC protected the rear of the retreating army and repulsed rebel cavalry attacks on May 11 at Franklin.

At the end of May, Fremont's forces returned to the Shenandoah Valley and the 1st CVC met and repulsed Jackson's cavalry at Wardensville. The 1st CVC continued to pursue Jackson's army and was present at the battles at Cross Keys and Port Republic. Both battles were Union defeats, and the army retired down the valley and arrived at Sperryville, Virginia on June 10.

Considering that the 1st CVC had been in the field for only three months, it's amazing that it was able to make a significant military contribution. What it lacked in manpower, it made up for in spirit and leadership. However, defeats continued with General Pope's disastrous campaign against General Lee in Northern Virginia in August 1862. The 1st CVC again provided rear cover as Pope's army retreated toward Washington. During the next three months, the battalion received 100 recruits and was completely refitted and remounted. In January of 1863, it was transferred to Baltimore for Provost Duty and to start the upgrade to a regiment.

The move to Baltimore was prompted by the promotion of the 1st Connecticut's Major William S. Fish to Provost Marshal of Baltimore. These were dark times for the secessionist citizens of Baltimore and it was the 1st Connecticut's responsibility to maintain order. With President Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus on April 27, 1861, wholesale arrest of suspected treasonous citizens began. Citizens could be arrested on the slightest suspicion of treason. Even the whistling of a secessionist tune could result in a terrifying knock on the door at 2 a.m. and the 1st Connecticut troopers would provide escort to prison. This was not a good time to be a Democrat. Provost duties continued until the 1st Connecticut reached regimental strength in March, 1864.

The 1st CVC never lost sight of its military responsibilities and capabilities. With an ongoing recruitment campaign in Connecticut, its ranks continued to grow. Military operations continued, although with unit sizes of less than two companies. Operations were conducted to Harpers Ferry on August 14, where a number of 1st CVC troopers were captured after attacking a superior force. The 1st CVC continued with forays to Waterford, Winchester and Harrisonburg Virginia, meeting the enemy each time. By January, 1864, outlying attachments had returned to Camp Cheesebrough, the unit's home base in Baltimore, and with rigorous drill and discipline, the 1st Connecticut was brought to regimental strength. On March 8, 1864, it joined the Army of the Potomac.

The 1st Connecticut Cavalry Volunteer Regiment was assigned to General Philip Sheridan's Cavalry, Army of the Potomac where it remained for the duration of the war. In early May, the regiment was engaged in the inconclusive Battle of the Wilderness, where the Union suffered 17,000 casualties. Supporting the rear of the retiring division, the 1st CVC checked a rebel attack at Todd's Tavern. Next they led General Ulysses Grant's move to Spotsylvania Court House. Then, as happened many times with cavalry operations, the ground gained by rapid maneuvers could not be held because the supporting infantry was slow to maneuver and reinforce the position. At the end of the day, the 1st CVC's division withdrew from the town.

On May 9, 1864 Sheridan assembled a force of 10,000 cavalry troopers in a bold offensive raid on Richmond.

Their goal was to weaken Confederate cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart, who was killed in the Battle of Yellow Tavern. By the time they returned to Grant's Army on May 25, 150 horses had been spent.

The 1st CVC would be present with Sheridan's cavalry at battles and raids between June of 1864 and March of 1865. In February and March 1865, Sheridan's cavalry conducted raids from Moorefield to Ashland, Virginia. From Ashland, Sheridan proceeded east and then south around Richmond to below Petersburg. This brought them to the start of the Appomattox Campaign.

On April 1, 1st CVC found itself at Five Forks, an important road junction in Virginia, which was being fiercely defended by the enemy. The brigade fought dismounted and the enemy charged twice but was severely repulsed. A third Union attack was successful and 6,000 prisoners taken. It was at Five Forks that Lyme's Ansel Ely was killed. Of the eight Lyme men who served in the 1st Connecticut, he was the only one who did not survive the war.

With the rebel forces in full retreat, Sheridan's Army, led by 1st CVC, was in hot pursuit. On April 9, Sheridan was about to make a final charge into what remained of General Lee's forces, when a flag of truce appeared in the rebel lines. Under the flag of truce, Lt. Col. Edward W. Whitaker of the 1st Connecticut entered the rebel lines and negotiated with General Longstreet to stop the fighting. Within hours, the 1st Connecticut Cavalry Regiment was given the honor of escorting General Grant to Appomattox to receive Lee's surrender.

Soon after the surrender, the 1st CVC returned to Washington, DC, and participated in all of the pomp and ceremonies accorded to victors. A further honor was bestowed on the 1st Connecticut: they were the only cavalry regiment to return home mounted. In New Haven, on August 18, 1865, the regiment was discharged.

In its three years and ten months of service, the regiment had 804 men killed, wounded, missing, or captured. Lyme's members, in addition to Ansel Ely, were Cassius Bartman, Edward Brockway, Hugh Brockway, Robert Carlton, C.S. Comstock, Thomas Forrest, and Charles Sawyer. The military record of Lyme's eight members lists the following: 1 killed, 1 POW, 1 deserter, 5 discharged honorably or for disability.

Lyme Public Hall Association Members May 2014 – April 2015

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* Sustaining Members

** Life Members

Upcoming Programs 2015



THE LYME PUBLIC HALL
Historical Organization and Archives

Earth Day Weekend, April 18 and 19

Lyme Spring Clean-Sweep

Town-wide roadside clean-up. Free trash bags available at Jane's and Hadlyme stores.

Sunday, April 19, 1 p.m.

Annual Lyme Public Hall Open House

Find out about the Lyme Public Hall Association and volunteer opportunities.

Sunday, April 19, 2 p.m.

Talk: The Cost of Battles Not Fought: Wars and the Rumors of War in Early New England

Connecticut State Historian Walter Woodward describes the role of rumor during and after the Pequot Wars of 1636-7.

Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m.

Talk: 1865: Lyme & the American Civil War

Jim Beers concludes his series of talks with a discussion of the 1st Connecticut Cavalry Regiment.

Saturday, May 9, 2-4 p.m.

Open House at the Lyme Local History Archives

Now located in the Lyme Public Library. Come see our new digs.

Thursday, June 11, 6 p.m.

Annual Meeting & Community Potluck Dinner

Featuring Bill Hosley on the importance of preserving local history and the role of community organizations. The principal of Terra Firma Northeast, Mr. Hosley is an independent scholar, cultural resource consultant, and writer. He was formerly Director of the New Haven Museum and Connecticut Landmarks where he cared for historic attractions throughout Connecticut.

Friday, July 3; Saturday, July 4; Sunday, July 5

Exhibit: Lyme in the 17th Century

The Town of Lyme as it was in the late 1600s, an exhibit in honor of the 350th anniversary of The Loving Parting.

Saturday, July 18, 2-4 p.m.

Tour: Samuel Smith House in East Lyme

Tour one of the oldest houses in our area (begun in 1685) to see what life was like in 17th-century Lyme. For directions, go to lymepublichall.org

Saturday, August 1, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Annual Tag & Bake Sale

A bargain hunter's delight!

Sunday, September 13, 2 p.m.

Talk: Lyme and the War of 1812

Bruce P. Stark, formerly Assistant State Archivist at the Connecticut State Library, discusses Lyme's role in this largely forgotten war, how the conflict affected the town, Lyme fatalities, and a case in which a militia officer was charged with treason.

Saturday, September 26, 2 p.m.

Walk: Cemetery tour with Parker Lord

Site to be announced.

Sunday, October 18, 2 p.m.

Talk: Lumbering in Lyme

Old Lyme town historian Dr. John Pfeiffer talks about lumbering and saw mills, Lyme's earliest enterprises, and a key to understanding 17th-century Lyme and the development of the northern part of the town.

Saturday, November 7, 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, coleslaw, breads, and apple crisp. Charge.

All events are free unless indicated. For details about this year's events go to lymepublichall.org

Lyme Local History Archives

The outstanding news for the Archives is that it has relocated from the Lyme Public Hall basement to a much needed, appropriately climate controlled and larger space within the new Lyme Public Library. We are very pleased and proud to be part of the Lyme Town Campus, and to contribute to the services available to the town there. The Archives remains an entity of the Lyme Public Hall Association in its new setting and its mission to collect, preserve and make accessible materials about the history of Lyme to the public does not change.

Among the forty-three accessions in 2014, which document important parts of Lyme history were:

- architectural drawings for a 1938 project of sanctuary renovations and landscaping at the First Congregational Church of Lyme by Lyme architects Homer and Alberta Pfeiffer.
- more than 200 documentary, high-resolution photographs of 18th-century carved gravestones from the Ely, Marvin, and Selden cemeteries.
- scanned copy of an original certificate verifying that Lyme resident Philemon Tiffany served as a soldier in the Connecticut Line of Continental Troops before January 1, 1779, signed in 1790 by Lyme selectmen Abel Hall and Daniel Lord.

Inquiries and research assistance requests were well distributed geographically: Lyme (23), Old Lyme (5), other Connecticut towns (12), other New England states (4), and other states (4.) Lyme/Old Lyme community organizations making requests included the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, Florence Griswold Museum, Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Lyme Cemetery Commission, Old Lyme Historical Society, Lyme Garden Club, Lyme Grange. The Archives is also a primary resource for the historical essay and illustrations in the annual Lyme Town Report.

We are pleased that information about our collections, indices of historical data, and the posts in Archives section of our website, www.lymepublichall.org are generating interest and follow up.

Volunteers provided valuable assistance to the archivist with special research, collection processing,



A corner of the new space showing flat files with maps and documents and comfortable seating for patrons.

transcription or exhibition development as well as helping with our major move. Great appreciation is extended to Ann Brubaker, Susan Fontanella, Carol Jones, Rhonda Marchesi, Claire Sauer, Roxanne Walters and Chris Zajac as well as to the Lyme Public Hall Association board of directors for its support.

Curious about the history that surrounds us in Lyme? The Archives is not just a resource for community organizations, researchers or genealogists. Even a short visit to the Archives can add to your appreciation of Lyme's history. Experience the pleasure of browsing through a growing collection of introductory binders with scanned photographs and documents from the Archives collections and exhibits. Each binder has a theme such as growing up in Lyme, local historic houses and architecture; 19th-century Lyme quilters, diaries by Lyme residents and more. Or try a simple search for subjects and names of interest to you in the Archives inventory on our patron computer.

Regular Open Hours:
Tuesdays 2-5 p.m. Thursdays 10 a.m.–noon
or by appointment
info@lymepublichall.org 860-598-9760

Archives Open House
Saturday, May 16, 2-4 p.m.
Please come and bring friends and family.
482 Hamburg Rd. in the Lyme Public Library

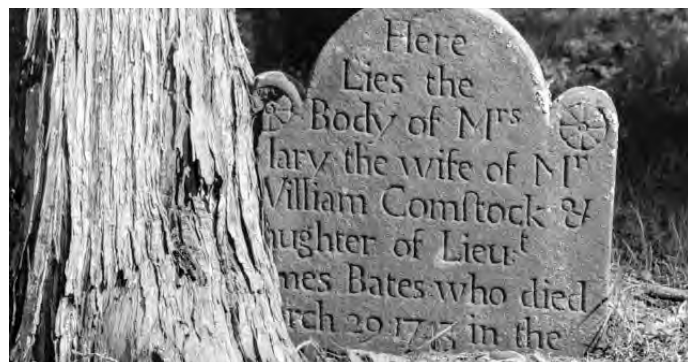
Lyme's History on Headstones

In 2014, the Hall's annual July exhibit explored what local gravestones tell us about the culture and history of Lyme in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Gravestone inscriptions record the life histories of Lyme residents while the symbols on the stones reflect attitudes toward death and dying.

Just as important as individual histories and community attitudes, the carving itself represents a major medium for artistic expression in this period. Many major Connecticut Valley carvers such as James Stanclift III, Gershom Bartlett, and John Isham are represented in Lyme.

The exhibit team of Carolyn Bacdayan, Ann Brubaker and Carol Jones originally planned to include just a few photographs of stones in Lyme's oldest cemeteries to illustrate how inscriptions and symbols changed from 1714 to 1815 and also to show the styles of different carvers. As the team visited local burying grounds, it became clear that many of the 18th-century stones were of a local reddish-brown sandstone that was available in Portland, Connecticut. This stone is very porous and many Lyme stones were deteriorating badly due to water damage and weathering. Local object conservators unfortunately confirmed that it is practically impossible to protect stones made of this material from progressive, and eventually complete, deterioration.

What started out as a small project related to the exhibit has become a larger initiative to document and photograph all 18th-century stones in Lyme cemeteries before they deteriorate. Over 200 photographs have already been taken by photographer Chris Zajac for the Lyme Local History Archives, preserving an important historical record for the future. The project will continue in 2015.



One of the oldest headstones in Lyme, made for Mary Bates Comstock who died in 1743, is challenged by natural forces.



Headstones in Lyme cemeteries made from porous local sandstone are deteriorating rapidly. The carving on Deborah Dorr's stone is only partially visible.



Photographer Chris Zajac at work in one of Lyme's oldest burying grounds.



THE LYME PUBLIC HALL
Historical Organization and Archives
249 Hamburg Road
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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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Lyme Public Hall Supports Town Campus Beautification Project

In celebration of the relocation of the Lyme Local History Archives to the new library, the Lyme Public Hall Association presented a check for \$5000 to the Lyme Garden Club for the Town Campus Beautification Project. Funds will go toward the purchase of trees and other plantings to create an inviting space for visitors.



Bill Denow and Leslie Lewis of the LPHA present a check to Ann Evans and Mary Ann Kistner of the Lyme Garden Club.

Special thanks to the following for supporting the Lyme Public Hall Association through grants or donations of goods, and services:

Ashlawn Farm Coffee
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Lisa Reneson
Chris Zajac

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