



THE NEWSLETTER *of* THE LYME PUBLIC HALL

VOL. 17, NO. 1 SPRING 2018

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— 2018 —

LYME IN THE GREAT WAR

Wednesday, July 4, 9 am-1 pm
Saturday, July 7, 1-4 pm
At the Lyme Public Hall

Learn about Lyme soldiers in World War I through letters, documents, and photographs from Lyme families and the Lyme Local History Archives. This exhibit is the culmination of two years of research by the staff of the Archives.

2018 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What is the Lyme Public Hall? It's a question I've encountered frequently in my past five years on the Board of Directors. In 1886, Lyme residents saw a need for a public venue in which to hold social and civic functions and the original Hall was built. So initially music and drama presentations, dances, dinners, spelling bees, and the occasional travelling troupe all had their day at the Public Hall.

As the Public Hall has evolved, a larger vision has developed going beyond social events and maintaining a historic building. In the 1980s our focus was expanded to include town history. Toward that end, in 1994 the Board of Directors voted to establish a document archives for the preservation of local family papers and organizational records and a space in the basement of the Hall was renovated for this use.

From the beginning, the Lyme Local History Archives under the direction of Archivist Carolyn Bacdayan has been committed to national standards and best practices in building the collection. When the Town Campus Center Planning Committee convened in 2010 to plan for the renovation of the Town Hall and Library, it was agreed that moving the Archives to the new library would be an asset to the Town. So with the opening of the new library in 2014, the Archives moved into a modern, publicly accessible facility that does justice to the collection.

Today, in recognition of the increased significance of the Archives to its parent association, revisions to the 1984 bylaws are under consideration. A recommendation has been made to incorporate the name of the Archives into the association's name. This would allow easier allocation of financial assets, while enhancing the Archives' exposure to the public. The revised title of the organization would be Lyme Public Hall Association and Lyme Local History Archives.

As you will see in this newsletter, the Public Hall has revived old traditions while assuring that Lyme's history is preserved through its public programs and the Lyme Local History Archives.

Bill Denow

NEWS *from the* LYME PUBLIC HALL

FINDING PARTNERS & SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

Building partnerships within the Lyme community has always been a priority for the Lyme Public Hall Association. Special consideration has been given to Lyme-based 501(c)(3) organizations. Non-profit organizations who are members of the Lyme Public Hall Association have unlimited use of the building without further charge. The Hall annually hosts the **Lyme Cub Scout Pack 32** annual Pinewood Derby and awards presentation. In April 2017, the **Lyme Land Conservation Trust** held its fiftieth annual meeting at the Hall, the exact same location as their first annual meeting, followed in July with an exhibition showcasing their accomplishments. The **Lyme Ambulance Association** regularly holds CPR classes at the Public Hall and



Cub Scouts in Pack 32 wait eagerly for the start of a heat during the 2018 Pinewood Derby held in the Public Hall.

another five classes are scheduled there in 2018. And the **Friends of the Lyme Library** also used the Hall this past year. Finally, one of our long-term partners has been the **Lyme Congregational Church** which uses the Public Hall during its annual rummage sale; in return we have used the church lawn for parking during events.

For the past several years the Association has made contributions to the Selectmen's Emergency Fund, and the Board voted to increase its contribution this year. Lyme is seen as an affluent community and most of us don't realize that

we have fellow citizens who require assistance to meet their daily needs. The Fund provides added flexibility to Lyme's social services network to meet those needs.

WHO TO CONTACT

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Email the Lyme Public Hall Association at info@lymepublichall.org
For the latest information on events,
Visit lymepublichall.org or join our e-mail list by sending a request to: info@lymepublichall.org

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN

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 fundraisers. We invite you to join. The membership year runs from May 1 to 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
Contributing \$50

Subscribing \$25
Sustaining \$100

Additional donations of cash, appreciated securities, or future bequests are also welcome. *Thank you for your continued support.*

Lyme Public Hall Association membership information will be mailed separately.
Look for it in your mailbox in April.

NEW LYME PUBLIC HALL PROGRAMS AIM TO PLEASE A NUMBER OF INTERESTS

Over the years, the Board of the Lyme Public Hall Association has offered programs and events for the enjoyment of the residents of Lyme and beyond. Public entertainment is not a new undertaking for the Public Hall. Since its origin in 1887, the Public Hall has been a community gathering place, particularly important in a small rural town like Lyme. Early programs were considered newsworthy by local newspapers.

After the reemergence of the LPHA in the 1980s, many of the Public Hall's programs have been historical in nature, in keeping with our new mission to focus on Lyme's history.

Getting the town involved was important then, and it is now. Last fall, we asked those who attended the Chowder Dinner what kinds of programs they would like to see, and they answered that topics like local artists, health and wellness, and at least one "open mic" night should be considered. So as you'll see on page 7, the board has responded with new kinds of programs. The days of balls and dancing until 2 am may be over, but you can look forward to many enjoyable events.

In addition, our annual Tag and Bake Sale will be moved to September to alleviate the heatstroke that our dedicated volunteers often feel when sorting and pricing items in the dog days of August. Instead, we will be featuring an old-fashioned Pie and Ice Cream Social that month, with entertainment by local musicians. This was a popular pastime in the old days of the Public Hall.

Of course, we will still be presenting talks and exhibits of historical interest, continuing with the WWI theme begun last year. And the Chowder Dinner will still be the highlight of our social calendar!

We hope to see many of you at the Public Hall this year. If you have any questions or suggestions for more activities, please email us at info@lymepublichall.org.



NORWICH BULLETIN

September 5, 1914

HAMBURG Entertainment Well Patronized

On the lovely evening of Aug. 29, in the public hall of Lyme, a very interesting entertainment was given under the auspices of Judge Marvin's class of the First Congregational church! The programme opened with a very enjoyable solo by Reginald Lord. The next number a pantomime entitled "Wanted, A Wife," was a complete success. Following this short kaleidoscope of life was a very amusing reading entitled, "Under a Buggy Seat", given by Miss Rose Girkens. Hearty applause followed. The next selection that greatly pleased the audience and called for several encores, were the vocal solos by young Master Capramella (?). A reading entitled "Grand Mother's Beau" was given entertainingly by Miss Esther Olsen. The favorite farce "A Love of a Bonnet" was admirably presented by six girls. Although all the parts were acted with ability, special favor was won by Miss Ida Harding, who played the part of Aunt Hopkins. In closing, a song was sung by the entire class and a "Good bye" to all. After the entertainment ice cream and cake were sold and games were played. The attendance was about one hundred and the church improvement society netted about \$20.

DISCOVERING LYME'S EARLY ROADS

by Bill Denow

Every road name has a story. In Lawrenceville N. J., there was a Denow farm, on the southern boundary of the farm ran an inter-urban trolley from Trenton to Princeton. Where the trolley crossed the unnamed road in front of the farm, a small station was built, Denow Station. By 1915, all local roads needed a name so Denow Road was created. This was told to me by Gram Denow when I was ten years old. So I was curious about Lyme roads. Who was Joshua? What about Blood Street? Who or what was Gungy? Pondering the names of our present-day Lyme road names led me to search town records in the Lyme Local History Archives and the vault at Lyme Town Hall.

What was surprising to me in reviewing the early Lyme town records, beginning in 1667, was the use of geographical locations that are now the names of roadways. Beaver Brook, Grassy Hill, Tantumorantum, Hopyard, Brush Hill and Mt. Archer all appear in the earliest 1667 to 1725 town records. These rather general locations were the basis for the distribution of town land to its inhabitants.

When land was granted, it typically was in 10-acre parcels, with the stipulation that the land be improved within five years. The expectation being that a home would be built on the property and the land farmed. When land grants resulted in abutting deeded properties, the town may have given directives for access. For highway frontages, four to ten rods (1 rod = 5 1/2 yards) would be allocated between the property boundaries. Bill Hill Road, one of the oldest roads in town, is an example of a right-of-way that is four rods wide.

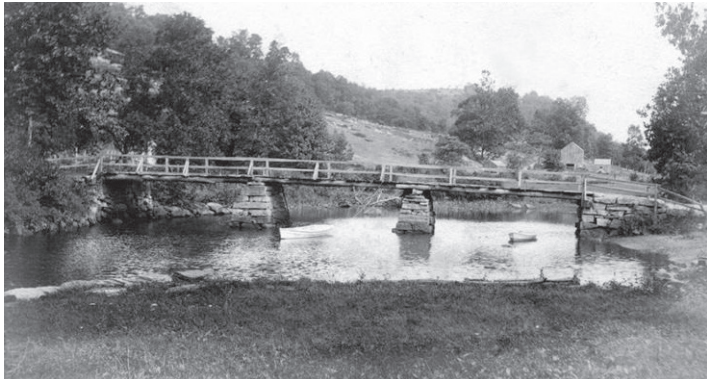
Abutting private tracts may have been required to provide a pentway between the properties, two



This pentway on Grassy Hill is one of several still existing in Lyme.



Bill Hill Road, one of the town's oldest roads, is an example of a right-of-way that is four rods wide.



Like most early Lyme bridges, the Hamburg bridge over the Eightmile River was a wooden structure. It was replaced by a concrete bridge in 1936.

rods wide, to allow the movement of cattle or carts to public land. A pentway was typically a burden to both property owners unless relieved by the town. Old pentways are still visible in town, and I found a very distinctive one on Grassy Hill.

The highways in early Lyme were nothing more than simple paths laid out over the existing land. The hiking trails in Lyme's present day preserves and parks would have qualified as highways in 1690s Lyme. Local roads were still largely wide dirt paths well into the twentieth century.

Highways were laid out by the surveyors, who were town citizens appointed to one-year terms, without any formal training. The town accorded a great deal of responsibility to the surveyors to provide the most practical layout of highways while minimizing impact to deeded property owners. Considering the vagueness of property deeds and the crude surveying equipment, many land disputes arose, even in the early years.

Crossing of waterways was an important consideration when laying out the highways. Finding fordable stream conditions—shallow stretches that allowed crossing by wading for both animals and carts—account for the meandering nature of some of the resulting roads. Seasonal changes in stream flow and icy conditions caused further frustrations to early travelers. These uncertainties led to the building of northern Lyme's first bridge at Beaver Brook in 1717,



A photo from the 1920s of drovers and oxen assembling near Beaver Brook Road shows what early Lyme roads were like. Note the Baptist Church in the background, now the Lyme Town Hall.

followed by the bridge crossing of the Eightmile River in 1722. The Eightmile River bridge, like many other early Lyme bridges, was largely wood and remained so until the mid-1930s when it was replaced by concrete.

This begs the question, how were the bridges paid for? A review of the Town meeting minutes for February 4, 1717, reveals the following: “at the same meeting it was voted that the surveyer in ye north quarter shall call out the Inhabitation that are under his precincts to build a bridge over Beavor Brook between Mr. Lords and Jasper Griffings Land,” an example of an early unfunded mandate.

Back to the highways and their names. The only road “names” recorded in the town minutes up to and including 1725, are roads that led to significant destinations, e.g., the road to New London, the road to Norwich, and the road to Moodus. In a later century these roads became New London Turnpike, Norwich Turnpike and Town Street. By 1725, the surnames of town residents lent themselves to road names. The names Banning, Becket, Brockway, Clark, Ely, Lord, Rogers, Sterling and Tinker are all mentioned in early town records, and of course, Attawanhood (whose English name was Joshua), the son of Uncas, the Mohegan Indian chief. He lived in the area of town traversed by today's Joshuatown Road. I am still searching for information about Blood Street and Gungy Road. So look for more on Lyme roads in another newsletter.

LYME LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVES NOTES

Patrons called, emailed or visited in person seeking information. More than eighty requests came from a wide geographic area: California, New Hampshire, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C.; thirty-one from Lyme/Old Lyme and seven from other Connecticut towns. The Connecticut River Museum requested a loan of three 19th century shad fishing artifacts to exhibit.

House history remains a popular topic, especially with newer residents in town. Lyme's 17th and 18th century history—families, culture, and settlements—continues as a strong interest. Genealogical searches by descendants of early Lyme settlers are frequent. Other interests were local Native American history and culture, homes of early 20th century Lyme artists, and the Hamburg Fair history.

More than fifty new acquisitions were made, thanks to donations from Lyme families. The largest group included photographs, documents and letters related to WWI. These materials and special loans were showcased in an Open House in October. A special research project was continued to identify materials in our collections about wartime Lyme, 1917-1920, and to seek additional documentation from state and federal records. This research will be the focus of the exhibit at the Lyme Public Hall this summer.



A World War I poster documented by Chamberlain Ferry in the Lyme Local History Archives.

VISIT THE LYME LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVES
Tuesdays 2-4 pm and Thursdays 10 am-12 noon

Appointments are welcome.

Carolyn Bacdayan, archivist 860-598-9760

In the Lyme Public Library, 482 Hamburg Road

More on the Archives: lymepublichall.org

Whether you are an old hand or first-timer to an archives, you are welcome to visit, just to browse or to undertake a search for information of interest to you about the historical town of Lyme.

If you come . . .

- ❖ The archivist will assist you. Have the subject of your search and your objective clearly in mind. Bring in any clues you have on hand that might help in your search.
- ❖ While relevant information is usually readily available, the puzzle-like nature of archival research may require use of multiple sources at the Archives or need follow-up. So leave plenty of time and anticipate that the archivist may have to do further research for you.
- ❖ Discovery, surprise, pleasure, relief, success and even frustration can occur in the course of your search. You'll find that new perspectives and interests often develop around your original objective, broadening and enriching the results.
- ❖ Observation of methods for storage and handling of fragile, historical materials may help you with your own valued documents and photos at home.
- ❖ Consultation with the archivist and archival searches are free. Photocopies are available, the first 10 pages free; color copies \$.50 each, b&w \$.25.

Appreciation is extended to Lucius and Alione Stark for sharing Stark family photos and documents of the World War I period; Ann Brubaker and George Willauer for research; Beverly Crowther for editing; Susan Fontanella and Gloria Ferri for processing tasks; Amy Lin and Damian Rubino for transcription work and Jerry Ehlen for ready technical help.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS 2018

Lyme Public Hall Association

April 1-21

Lyme Spring Clean Sweep

Town-wide roadside clean up. Free trash bags available at the Lyme Town Hall, Lyme Library, Jane's and Hadlyme stores.

Sunday, April 8, 2 pm

***Mind and Body Wellness
with Maryla Radziszewski***

Certified massage therapist, personal trainer and owner of MoreFit, Maryla will inspire you to get your mind, body and spirit ready for the coming months.

Friday, April 13

Open Mic Night for Young Talent

Local teens showcase their talents.
See website for details.

Sunday, May 6, 2 pm

The Art of Lyme

A panel of local artists talks about their work process and how Lyme inspires them.

Thursday, June 14, 6 pm

***Annual Meeting &
Community Potluck Dinner***

Local historian and musician Rick Spencer presents the music of World War I to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the armistice.

Wednesday, July 4, 9 am-1 pm and

Saturday, July 7, 1-4 pm

Lyme in the Great War

An exhibit by the Local History Archives highlighting Lyme soldiers in WWI.

Sunday, August 5

Pie and Ice Cream Social. Time TBA

An old-fashioned pie and ice cream social with fun and music. Purchase a pie to take home while they last. There will be a charge for this event.

Wednesday, September 5, 7:30 pm

Organ Donation: Giving the Gift of Life

Dr. Richard Jones discusses how organ donations have saved the lives of residents in our area and beyond.

Saturday, September 22, 9 am-1 pm

Annual Tag and Bake Sale

Donate items you no longer need or find treasures to take home at our annual fundraising event.

Sunday, October 21, 2 pm

Coming to Terms with Defeat: Germany 1918

Professor Rolf Wolfswinkel discusses how the end of WWI affected the warring nations, and its profound impact on Europe in the years that followed.

Saturday, November 10, 5-7 pm

***The Lyme Public Hall's
Traditional Chowder Dinner***

Join us for this delicious Public Hall tradition, featuring homemade corn chowder, clam chowder, cole slaw, breads, and apple crisp. There is a charge.

Saturday, December 1

Holiday Wreath Making

A new collaboration between with the Lyme Public Hall and the Lyme Garden Club. Materials and greens will be provided; bring your own trimmings to customize your creation. Pre-registration will be required and there will be a small charge to cover costs.

All events are free unless indicated. They take place at the Lyme Public Hall if no other location is specified.

For details about this year's events go to lymepublichall.org



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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-18

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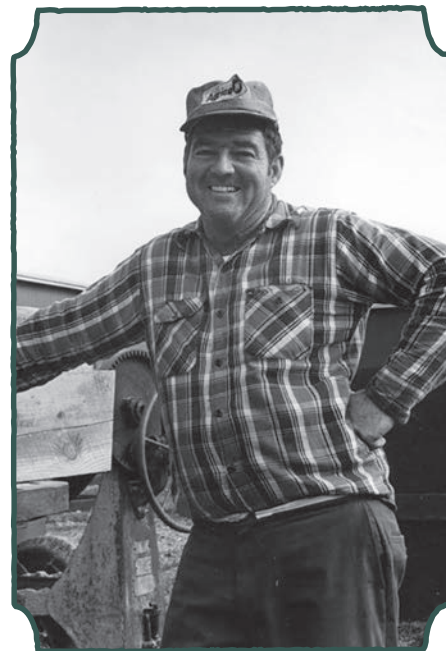
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Ashlawn Farm Coffee
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Lyme Garden Club
Gerry Beers
Roger Dill
Brett Enman
Lisa Reneson

And thanks to everyone who donated baked goods and volunteered time to LPH functions in 2018.



Our gratitude continues
for the life of
JACK TIFFANY (1932-2018)