



# THE NEWSLETTER *of* LYME PUBLIC HALL & LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

SPRING 2019

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— 2019 —

### VANISHING LYME

Thursday, July 4, 9 am-1pm  
Friday, July 5, 1-4 pm  
Saturday, July 6, 1-4 pm  
At the Lyme Public Hall

This exhibit showcases Lyme traditions and features that no longer exist or are disappearing, using photographs, historic documents and diaries from the Lyme Local History Archives.

## 2019 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reflecting the growing significance of the Local History Archives over the past 25 years and to raise awareness that Lyme has an archive, we have amended our organization's name to Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives, Inc.

Among the things that did not change was the generous support of volunteers. They helped bring us successes, including the annual Tag/Bake Sale and the Chowder Dinner, two of our biggest events. With our Board operating with a minimum number of directors, there was some question about how smoothly the events would run but both went off without a hitch. The Tag/Bake Sale intake week went well and the sale was the highest grossing in recent memory. For the Chowder Dinner, we had to adjust prep work to comply with new Ledge Light Health District rules but volunteers helped us out, and no one went home hungry.

Suggestions from a patron survey prompted us to offer well-received events that included a panel discussion by local Lyme artists, a pie and ice cream social with musical entertainment by Eight Mile River Band, a Holiday wreath-making workshop co-sponsored by the Lyme Garden Club, a lecture by Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel exploring the aftermath of WWI, and a talk by Dr. Richard Jones about organ donations.

While July's oppressive heat hurt turnout at our July 4<sup>th</sup> exhibit, "Lyme in the Great War," the exhibits at the Lyme Library and Town Hall were both well received.

The Local History Archives last year saw a 60 percent increase in contacts and requests. Archivist Carolyn Bacdayan and a dedicated group of volunteers do a commendable job. After 24 years as Archivist, Carolyn has given notice that she will step down in two years, prompting the Board to initiate a search for a replacement. The number of volunteer hours she has dedicated to the Archives makes the search for a local volunteer difficult. As a result, we are looking at a paid position of archivist, and are gathering facts, speaking with other archival institutions and reviewing the financial impact on our resources.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to seeing you at the Hall.

*Bill Denow*

## THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

“It is better to give than to receive” is an old maxim that continues to be true today, although not for the reasons you might think. It turns out that doing good deeds helps to stimulate the release of endorphins and other “feel-good” chemicals in our brains.

There are a lot of ways to make a difference, and an important one is by volunteering your time and talents locally. Lyme benefits from volunteers, as most of our committees and organizations depend on them to make things run. There would be no fire and ambulance service, no recreational trails, no Hamburg Fair without them.

Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives relies completely on volunteers for all of our activities. From serving as full-time Board members to helping out for an hour at an event, there are plenty of opportunities to participate. All of the smiling faces you see at the dinners and the tag sales, all of the organizing and cataloging in the Archives, all of the yummy baked goods you have enjoyed are the products of someone donating



Chowder Dinner volunteers

time and energy to the organization. If you are interested in helping us out in any way, you can contact us at [info@lymepublichall.org](mailto:info@lymepublichall.org).

I write this as I prepare to step down after a decade of service on the Board of the Public Hall. I am very proud of the work that we have done, and the groundwork we have laid for the future, in preserving and promoting the history and culture that make our little corner of Connecticut such a special place. Over the years it has been my privilege to get to know so many amazing people who have been willing to pitch in to keep the Association growing and changing to meet the needs of Lyme’s residents. Some have roots in Lyme that go back to the town’s founding; others are newcomers who wanted to immerse themselves in the fabric of a small town. What they have in common is a generosity of spirit and a willingness

to roll up their sleeves and get things done. And I bet that makes them feel pretty good.

*Leslie Lewis*

## WHO TO CONTACT

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**Questions? Comments?**

Email Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives at [info@lymepublichall.org](mailto:info@lymepublichall.org).

**For the latest information on events,** [lymepublichall.org](http://lymepublichall.org)

**To join our e-mail list for notice of upcoming events,** send a request to: [info@lymepublichall.org](mailto:info@lymepublichall.org).

## WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN

Membership in Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives is open to anyone with an interest in the Lyme community. The organization 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 & Local History Archives, 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 & Local History Archives, Inc., membership information will be mailed separately.  
Look for it in your mailbox in April.

# MUSIC AND THEATER AND PIES, OH MY!

We will soon be off and running with a new year full of entertaining programs and events at the Lyme Public Hall. Some are old favorites, like the Chowder Dinner and the July 4th Exhibit, while some are newer activities.

Last year we also offered important discussions, including Dr. Richard Jones's presentation on the topic of organ donations. It was a chance for the public to hear from local residents who have been donors or recipients of a vital organ. Dr. Jones uses his medical experience to counsel and guide potential donors and recipients through the seemingly daunting experience of organ transplant. Following his lecture at the Hall, a number of people contacted him about how to proceed. Let's keep spreading the message: "Organ Donation Saves Lives!"

In 2018 we also revived a Public Hall tradition from the early 20th century with our Pie and Ice Cream Social. We don't know what was hotter—the temperature or the picking of the Eight Mile River Band—but all agreed it was a great time. It will be even better this year when the Hall is air-conditioned: After 132 years of natural Lyme cooling, and last summer's heat wave, the Hall has installed air conditioning.

Coming up in 2019 we will continue to offer our historical talks and the July 4th exhibit, but we have some exciting new offerings as well. In the tradition of the "theatricals" that used to be staged at the Hall, we will be helping to present "Crossings: A Musical Journey." The work will feature local actors and should provide lots of entertainment. We also plan to have local musicians and bands featured, so keep an eye and ear out for those dates. Finally, for those of you who might like to try your hand at memoir writing, Hadlyme resident and former New York Times editor and writing coach Joan Motyka will host a series of workshops to help you draw out your stories and polish your narrative skills.

We also know that many of you enjoy the home-made treats that are featured at our bake sales and dinners, so we have included the recipe for Lisa McCarthy's amazing apple pie. In fact, we have been inspired to hold a recipe swap in April to share all those family treats. You can find the complete program listing on Page 7 of this newsletter; check out [lymepublichall.org](http://lymepublichall.org) for the most up-to-date information about the recipe swap and other activities. We hope you will enjoy these, and we hope to see you at the Hall in the coming year.

## *Lisa McCarthy's Apple Pie*

### **Ingredients**

7 cups chopped apples\*  
¾ cup white sugar  
2-3 Tbsp. white flour (if apples are very juicy use 3; if not, use 2)  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
¼ tsp. salt  
Dash of freshly ground nutmeg  
1 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice  
2 Tbsp. salted butter  
Pie crust of your choice to fit a 9" Pyrex pie plate

### **Directions**

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.  
Mix dry ingredients with a whisk in a bowl large enough to fit the apples.  
Peel, core and chop apples into approximately 1-1½-inch pieces  
and add to bowl with dry ingredients.  
Add lemon juice and mix well.  
Let sit for 10 minutes.

Place in 9" pie plate lined with pastry, dot with butter, and add top pastry. Vent top pastry.  
Bake for 40-45 minutes, covering edge of top pastry with foil for the first 20 minutes.

*\*I like to use a mix of apple varieties and always use only one Macintosh (they get too mushy), one Golden Delicious, and two or more Granny Smiths. It takes about 8-9 apples for 7 cups.*

# LYME'S EXPANDING ROADS

by Bill Denow

*This article is a continuation of my research on Lyme's early roads published in the 2018 newsletter, which can be found at [lymepublichall.org](http://lymepublichall.org). The 2018 article was based on town records, Volumes 1 & 2, spanning the years 1667-1730. Volume 3 inexplicably went missing many years ago, leaving a 73-year gap in town records. This article picks up with Volume 4, 1803-1846. Does anyone have Volume 3 in their attic?*

Minutes of the town meeting records had undergone dramatic improvements by 1803. Phonetic spelling disappeared, sentence structure and punctuation improved and steel nib pens replaced the feathered quills of the 1700's. Although there was still an adjustment to the style and penmanship from a different clerk recorder at each meeting, gone were the paint brush strokes and incomprehensible squiggles.

In those 73 years, changes to the town were dramatic. In 1730 the better part of Lyme—over 100 square miles—was wilderness. By 1803 the town had divided into six Ecclesiastical Societies with the meeting house, which was another name for a church then, the focal point for communal activities. The Societies carried names or numbers that helped identify geographical areas: 1st & 2nd, East, Chesterfield, Hadlyme and New Salem. The government responded to an earlier complaint of town meetings being restricted to one location in the southern part of town by rotating them at different Societies. This distributed the travel burden equitably—and improved attendance.

Likewise, the size of town government had increased significantly. In 1730 12 to 15 officials governed; by 1803 more than 60 did so.

Efficiencies were introduced with the establishment of highway districts. Their boundaries were controlled by a Selectman and could be adjusted easily as local conditions changed. Road improvements were initiated by an individual within a neighborhood seeking a better route to an adjoining part of town. Many roads were initially Native American pathways and as the town developed the routes proved to be impracticable for contemporary needs.

At every annual town meeting citizens were “chosen or appointed for a one year term” to fill positions in the highway district in which they lived. A highway district would have a foreman, surveyors, fence viewers, and pound keepers for stray animals, totaling 20 people in some districts. The surveyor had an additional responsibility not obvious from the job title. At the 1805 annual meeting a tax

of 2 cents on the dollar of assessed property value was levied for highway repair. It was the responsibility of the surveyors to collect this tax in their districts and as an incentive they were allowed to keep 2.5% of the gross tax collected. At the same meeting, a provision was “voted” to allow citizens to pay their highway tax with equivalent labor. This labor rate was also set at the meeting and typically was 10 cents per hour per man and 12½ cents per hour for a team. This was a far more productive than the press gang tactics of the 1700's. (Early in the town history, when public work projects were unfunded, citizens were required to provide labor when directed by Selectmen. Surveyors were directed to organize a work party to achieve the task—an early example of an unfunded mandate.)

Even as efficiencies were introduced, other issues surfaced. In an 1803 meeting, there was “noted opposition to a Turnpike road from New London and New Haven.” One recurring issue in the Town of Lyme—and this is true today—is that if a project has the potential to add financial burden to the town, there's immediate opposition by town officials. Later we'll see how this opposition was overcome.



Joseph Caples carriage on Grassy Hill Road, c. 1930

The Town of Lyme owned the Lyme side of the Saybrook ferry. In 1804 town officials discussed improvements to the Lyme side that included building a house with lodging chambers for travelers awaiting favorable conditions for a ferry crossing; upgrading the dock, and deepening the channel. Apparently, this was accomplished by 1807, when they looked for a lessee offering a three- to six-year lease.

By 1805 a number of Turnpike proposals affecting Lyme came before the state legislature. Lyme opposed any application unless the road was built by an Incorporated Turnpike Company with Bonded money. This proved to be the means for the building of Salem, Hamburg and New London to Saybrook Turnpikes, all toll roads.

Between 1806 and 1808, the town made repairs to Hamburg Bridge, and reviewed petitions for roads in and out of Hamburg, including a bridge at Falls River. An 1808 meeting “Voted acceptance of a new road from Montville line to J Mannford’s at no expense to the town.” This might be the east end of today’s Grassy Hill Road.

In 1814, the first occurrences of formal road names were used in town Records. The Black Hall Road and Hamburg Road to New Hamburg were allocated funds for repairs. Note the ‘h’ in Hamburg was dropped, probably an omission by the recording clerk. Also in 1814, it was “voted that the laying out a road near W. Tinker be accepted provided it does not exceed \$40 to the Town.” This is today’s Tinker Lane.

At an 1816 town meeting “a committee formed to review best method to repair town roads.” This would be the first step in bringing road repairs and construction under a standard specification.

At the May 1818 meeting the town voted to oppose the petition to form a new town in New Salem, but by May 1819 that was no longer the case. Of note: This is the first recorded meeting held at the Baptist Meeting House in Pleasant Valley, now part of the present-day Lyme Town Hall. This location, as well as the Grassy Hill Meeting House, became the routine location for most town meetings in coming years.

At an 1826 town meeting “Voted that R. Selden & Son shall have the private privilege of laying out their own highway.” This would likely be Selden Road at Joshuatown Road, leading down to the river. This could be the earliest form of private development in what today would be called a subdivision.

Of interest, in the 1827 town meeting it seems that some of the Surveyors were in hot water with the Selectman: “Voted that the Selectman be directed to call on the Surveyors of Highways to settle up their ‘rate’ bills if not settled the 1st of June 1828 to prosecute such negligent Surveyors.” It appears some of the Surveyors had gotten a little lax in giving the town the highway taxes they collected.

Public funds must have been tight at the 1830 town meeting, as the Selectman tried a new approach to road repairs: “Voted that the Town grant the sum of \$50 from the



Fosdick house, corner of Beaver Brook Road and Hamburg Road (now Route 156), c. 1920

Treasury for repairing the road leading from Hamburg to the house of Col S Seldon provided the inhabitants on the road side (gave) a like sum of \$50 by private subscription to be laid out upon said road payable in money or labor.” (The road cited is likely Joshuatown Road leading to Selden Road in Hadlyme.) This technique must have been successful because the Selectman offered the same 50-50 split in 1831 when Hadlyme residents petitioned the town to repair what’s now Ferry Road.

At an 1833 town meeting “Voted that the Selectman go and view the Road from Blood Street school house to the Burt land and report what alterations (if any) they think necessary to be made next Town Meeting.” This is the first use of “Blood Street” in town records, and the origin of the name is still unclear. The Burt land is west of the school house and the family lived on the north side of Rogers Lake and their land extended north to Hog and Norwich ponds.

At the October 1835 town meeting there was a petition to raise the Fall River Bridge to allow loaded scows of wood to pass under at common high water. The Selectman voted to postpone the action indefinitely. But it’s not to say that the bridge wasn’t raised at a later date. This might explain why today the Cove Road Bridge and causeway are much higher than the Route 156 Hamburg Road Bridge.

Flooding was severe in the spring of 1836; as the records note “Voted that the Selectmen be directed to rebuild the Bridge at Hamburg as soon as possible at the same place where the last one stood.” All references to Hamburg Bridge refer to the present-day Joshuatown Bridge over the Eight Mile River.

This is just a small span of time of Lyme’s 354-year history but it is rich in documentation showing our town’s development. I had expected to find greater usage of formal names for local roads by the 1800’s, but that was not the case. Moving forward at an oxen pace, we will get to the 20th century.

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# TAPPING THE RICHES OF THE ARCHIVES

Last year was a busy and productive one for the Lyme Local History Archives. More than 130 requests, by phone, email or personal visits to the Archives, came in as people sought assistance for information related to Lyme history on a wide variety of subjects. This count was almost one and a half times the number received the previous year. The Archivist responds to each request with as much information as possible to help advance the search. The Archives also welcomes patrons who do their own research.

Requests came from a variety of places and individuals, many of whom are current or former residents. In 2018, 25 percent of the requests came from patrons living in Lyme and neighboring towns (Old Lyme, East Haddam, East Lyme). Requests also came from other Connecticut towns, including Haddam, New Britain, Norwich, Old Saybrook and Willimantic. States around the country were also represented, including California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and South Carolina.

Two major exhibits, “Lyme in the 17th Century” and “Lyme in the Great War,” were presented in the last three years at the Lyme Public Hall and the Lyme Town Hall. Selected highlights were also shown at the annual Archives Open Houses and Lyme Public Library. These



Dr. Josiah G. Ely house, barn and outbuildings, Hamburg Road at Joshuatown Road, c. 1880. Archives patrons often seek provenance of houses and barns.

and other exhibits drew directly from the Archive’s collections and research by its staff. Archives exhibits are an excellent opportunity to be introduced to, and to learn more, about our town.

## Some Recent Patron Searches

- ❖ House histories and photos for current owners
- ❖ Ancestor gravesites, location, headstone photos
- ❖ Personal genealogical searches related to historical persons of Lyme
- ❖ Lyme family collections: letters, diaries, records, photos
- ❖ Lyme citizen biographies and photos for publications and organization events
- ❖ Ancestor military service documentation for Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and WWI
- ❖ Native American archaeology and artifacts in Lyme
- ❖ Photos for local renovators of period architectural features in Lyme barns and houses
- ❖ Identification in patrons’ old photos of Lyme locations, houses, people or events
- ❖ History and evidence of the African American and Native American presence in Lyme in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- ❖ Authors seeking examples from Lyme for studies of a historical period or geographic location

### CONTACT THE ARCHIVES

*... if you have questions, would like to donate Lyme historical materials, or volunteer computer or editing skills. Make an appointment or visit during open hours at the Lyme Public Library, 428 Hamburg Road:*

**Tuesday 2-4PM • Thursday 10-noon**

**lymepublichall1887@gmail.com**

**Archives phone: 860-598-9760**

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS 2019

## Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives, Inc.

**April 1-22**

### *Lyme Spring Clean-Sweep*

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

**April 28, 2 pm**

### *Old-Fashioned Recipe Swap*

Bring a family favorite dish to share and its recipe.

**June 1, 7 pm and June 2, 2 pm**

### *The Crossing: A Musical Journey*

This original musical tells the true story of love, loss, and discovery in Scotland and Connecticut, featuring some of your favorite local performers. Tickets: \$25 adult, \$10 children and students.

**June 3, 10, and 17, 6:30-8:30 pm**

### *Writing Your Story*

This three-session memoir writing class will help you explore the stories only you can tell. The instructor, Joan Motyka, is a former editor and writing coach at *The New York Times*. \$30 Lyme Public Hall members, \$50 non-members.

**June 13, 6 pm**

### *Annual Meeting & Community Potluck Dinner*

LPH President Bill Denow will present a talk entitled "Lyme Roads: What's in a name?"

**July 4, 9 am-1 pm and July 5 and 6, 1-4 pm**

### *Vanishing Lyme*

Photographs, historic documents, and diaries from the Lyme Local History Archives highlight traditions and distinctive features that are disappearing or gone, from one-room schools to rural post offices.

**July 19, 7-9 pm**

### *The George Manstan Big Band*

Enjoy the sounds of a real big band. Bring your dancing shoes and refreshments.

**August 18, 6:30-8:00 pm**

### *Pie and Ice Cream Social*

This old-fashioned pie and ice cream social will feature the Eight Mile River Band, and pies for sale (while they last). \$5 per person.

**September 21, 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.

**October 20, 2 pm**

### *The Price of Folly: Germany after WWI*

Professor Rolf Wolfswinkel returns to discuss the democratic fiasco that began in November 1932, when German voters made Hitler's Nazi Party the biggest in parliament, and followed a year later when Hitler abolished individual freedoms and established a totalitarian state.

**November 9, 5-7 pm**

### *The Best Chowder Dinner*

Enjoy homemade chowders, coleslaw and baked goods with your friends and neighbors to benefit Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives. Adults \$15, children 7-12 \$10, and free for 6 and under.

**December 7, 1 pm**

### *Holiday Wreath Making*

Get ready for the holidays with a workshop sponsored by Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives and the Lyme Garden Club. Materials and greens will be provided; bring your own trimmings to customize your creation. Pre-registration required but no charge to attend.

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All events are free and open to the public, and take place at the Lyme Public Hall, 249 Hamburg Road, Lyme CT, unless otherwise noted. For more information, go to [lymepublichall.org](http://lymepublichall.org).

# Lyme Public Hall



**& Local History Archives, Inc.**

249 Hamburg Road, P.O. Box 1056

Lyme, CT 06371

lymepublichall.org

Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives, Inc. 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 2018-19

Bill Denow, President

Leslie Lewis, Vice President

Jerry Ehlen, Treasurer

George House

Jacqueline Jaffe

Richard Jones

Jos Könst

Lisa McCarthy

Kathy Tisdale

Rolf Wolfswinkel

## POSTAL PATRON

Special thanks to the following for their help and support of Lyme Public Hall & Local History Archives, Inc., in 2018:

Gerry Beers

Ann Brubaker

Roger Dill

Brett Enman

Angie Falstrom

Carol Jones

Lisa Reneson

Coffee's Country Market

Essex Savings Bank

Lyme Garden Club

Estate of Kenneth Plimpton

And thanks to everyone who donated baked goods and volunteered time to help support the functions of our organization in 2018.



U.S. Postal wagon for Rural Free Delivery stopping in Hamburg en route to Hadlyme Post Office for resident pickup of mail, c. early 1900s. This and other historic photographs will be featured in the 2019 Vanishing Lyme exhibit.