

Chapman Lecture Series

CHAPMAN LECTURE SERIES is held in cooperation with the Acton Public Library. All programs are open to the public without charge and begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Library.

March 24, 2011

Kevin Murphy, Author, "Crowbar Governor: The Life and Times of Morgan Gardner Bulkeley."

Fenwick resident Morgan Bulkeley was president of Aetna Life Insurance from 1879 to 1922. He served four terms as mayor of Hartford, two terms as governor of Connecticut, and a term as U.S. Senator. He founded the Hartford Dark Blues baseball team and became the first president of the National Association, forerunner of the National League, and was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. During his controversial "holdover" term as governor that he used a crowbar to remove a lock that had been placed on his office door after refusing to vacate the governor's chambers. Kevin Murphy has written a classic story that examines the life and politics in Connecticut and the remarkable career of Morgan Bulkeley of Fenwick.

May 12, 2011

Matthew Warshauer, Author, "Connecticut in the American Civil War: Slavery, Sacrifice, and Survival."

This year is the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War and a number of state and local commemorative events are planned. Professor Warshauer, is heading the state-wide observation and is a noted author and Professor of History at Central CT State University. His book will be released April 15, the start of the Civil War.

Garden Report



Snow still piled in front of Stevenson Archive

The garden is well and truly put to bed under this downy blanket. Last week you could see the outlines of flower beds, the jig and jag of the soldier brick, and the dry tops of the plants showing above the white, but this week there's nothing but pure clean snow. The pear tree is providing a sculptural element against the chimney, and the blue shadows of branches play over the gable ends and across the blank, dazzling expanses. We've been talking about adding winter interest to the garden – peeling bark or interesting berries, or perhaps something wonderful in the way of branch structure – but Marianne looked at the space and thought what we really need is a winter sculpture garden on the lawns. A sort of seasonal outdoor gallery where artists could display their work and we could enjoy even more of the interplay of light and shadow, form and void, art and nature. Something to think about while we plan and discuss what we're doing, come spring, in the garden.

There are a few pictures posted on the blog, taken over the past couple of weeks, in case you haven't put on your snowshoes and ventured out. <http://harthousegarden.blogspot.com/>

Sheila Grabam-Smith, Co-chair Garden Committee

Museum Committee

After the busy summer season, we initiated our plan for the House which involves cleaning, organizing and taking an inventory of every room, storage area, closet and drawer. This is necessary because we have not had a House Committee for many years. We have completed work in the dining room and kitchen areas. This involved the cleaning of the drapes and hallway carpeting, as well as, a check of all fire extinguishers which will now be done on a yearly basis. We are working closely with the Hospitality, Ways and Means

and Garden Committees, Adult Guides, and all others who use the House frequently so that we have a user-friendly home while keeping its integrity.

We are pleased with the work completed in Phase I of the House improvements. Having proper dehumidification and drainage systems that will prevent water damage is so important to the preservation of this wonderful House.

Donna and Marie



The Old Saybrook Historical Society

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Museum Committee

The Museum Committee is pleased to announce the acquisition of three very significant gifts recently made to the Old Saybrook Historical Society. Two gifts of Hart Family Keepsakes were generously gifted by Elizabeth C. Titus Putnam, direct descendant of General William Hart. Several of the Items include: Elizabeth Bull Hart's (General Hart's daughter-in-law) rocking chair and silhouette, shawls, fans, shoes and thimbles. A silk pincushion dated 1735 the year of Elizabeth's birth is truly an exceptional piece to be treasured by the Society. In addition to the above, a Four Piece Silver Tea Service owned by Elizabeth Miller Hart Jarvis, granddaughter of General Hart and mother of Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt has "come home" as the donor states. Both gifts were given in memory of Elizabeth C. Titus Putnam's mother, Elizabeth Robinson Cushman and her Hart Family ancestors.

Gary E. Wait, Archivist and friend to the Old Saybrook Historical Society has gifted to us two spectacular collections of transfer ware, one blue and the other is brown/black. Both sets are the "Ivanhoe Pattern" and made by Podmore, Walker and Company of Tunstall England sometime between 1834 and 1859.

The set of blue was gifted in honor of Elizabeth C. Titus Putnam and all her good work associated with the Student Conservation Association. The brown/black set was given in memory of the late Bob Ingham. Bob was a brilliant historian and dedicated member of our Society for many years.

The Old Saybrook Historical Society is truly blessed by the generosity and friendship of Elizabeth and Gary who thought enough of the Society to share their treasures for future generations to enjoy. We also thank our Registrar, Dorothy Swan for all her help getting the required paperwork completed.

*Donna D. DiBella
Marie McFarlin, co-chairs Museum Committee*



A Tale of Two Friends

By Tedd Levy

Charles Dickens and his classic stories have remained popular since he wrote them in the mid-1800s. Who is there who has not heard the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and Tiny Tim? Who has not profoundly described current world affairs as, well, the best of times and the worst of times?

Major works, "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859); and "Great Expectations" (1861) remain re-quired reading in many high schools and colleges today.

Dickens made two reading tours of the United States, one in 1842 and the other in 1867-1868. On his second visit he reportedly stayed in an inn operated by his friend Capt. Ely Morgan. The inn was originally built as a residence by Major Richard William Hart, a son of General William Hart, and was located on the corner of Main Street and the Old Boston Post Road.

Dickens had sailed to the U.S. from Liverpool to embark on a reading tour. Arriving in Boston in November he devoted the next several weeks to dinners with notable American authors including Emerson and Longfellow and began traveling between Boston and New York for readings of his popular works.

As a seaman, Captain Ely Morgan commanded passenger ships between New York and London, the West Indies and elsewhere and apparently he and Dickens had become friends on one of these journeys. So it was not surprising that traveling between Boston and New York, Dickens stayed with Captain Morgan.

Nor was it surprising that Dickens used Captain Morgan as the basis for one of his fictional characters. That character was Captain Jorgan in a short, little noted novel, "A Message from the Sea" written in 1860. The complete text for "A Message from the Sea" is available at: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Message_from_the_Sea

Captain Jorgan was older, more knowing and experienced than the seamen with whom he talked. He was respected by others and comfortable about himself and would strike "his leg with his open hand, as some men do when they are pleased—and as he always did when he was pleased."



"For Captain Jorgan to sit anywhere in his long-skirted blue coat and blue trousers, without holding converse with everybody within speaking distance, was a sheer impossibility," Dickens wrote.

"He had seen many things and places and had stowed them all away in a shrewd intellect and a vigorous memory. He was an American born, was Captain Jorgan,—a New-Englander,—but he was a citizen of the world, and a combination of most of the best qualities of most of its best countries."

Not a bad description for a friend. So we may know a little by inference about Captain Eli Morgan but in real life we have not found a very extensive historical record of his experiences (and would welcome any information that readers may have). Not long after his death in 1887, his home was closed and later purchased by H.C. Chapman and converted it to the Ye Old Saybrook Inn.

Observations by Charles Dickens

- *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.*
- *It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.*
- *Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own; and from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, it is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy that we can scarcely mark their progress.*
- *No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it to anyone else.*
- *There is nothing so strong or safe in an emergency of life as the simple truth.*
- *This is a world of action, and not for moping and droning in.*
- *We forge the chains we wear in life.*
- *Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do it well; whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself completely; in great aims and in small I have always thoroughly been in earnest.*

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President's Message

Greetings and Happy 2011,

Brrrr...it's bone-chilling cold these January days. Snow, snow and more snow, Connecticut is a picturesque calendar scene. First, a blizzard on December 26th covered the frozen ground with a thick blanket of white, then a bombogenesis (real word) storm on January 12th, dropped 18 -24 inches on us. This could be a winter for the history books.

Hunkering down for a day, waiting for the storm to clear, left time to make soup, read a book, write an overdue letter and think about long neglected household tasks. Much like people did before 24 hour news and computers complicated our lives.

Slowing down even for one day helps to take stock of what is important and what is not. (Well, I guess cleaning the hall closet can wait until Spring).

But, there are some home projects that really shouldn't be put off .

Our 244 year old, Hart House has long standing basement problems that fall into this category. Preserving the integrity of this fine old house is a paramount responsibility of the Society. Phase I, involving the exterior of the house has been completed, Phase II involving the foundation and basement is now scheduled.

At the December Board of Trustees meeting, Building Committee members, Dave McFarlin and Jim Platt detailed the proposed structural and mechanical renovation plan. Dave, who is an engineer, has spent considerable time evaluating this project. He has agreed to monitor the work progress and maintain a photographic record for the Archives. Treasurer, Bob Pedemonte presented various financing options for the project. The Board agreed to move forward with Phase II using savings and a portion of the endowment to pay for the project. We have contracted with a

builder, experienced in antique house restoration, who will have the work completed by Spring.

The interior of the Hart House is being given the personal attention it deserves by Museum Committee co-chairs, Donna DiBella and Marie McFarlin, (see museum report).

Other news, the Archive will be the site of a genealogy course this February and March. We are very fortunate to have the highly respected genealogist, Greg Thompson, teach the 6-week course. Newly purchased for the Stevenson Archive is a large document scanner, which will be a real help in preserving our fragile papers and books. Jim Rothgeb has offered to orient volunteers working on this project. Please call 860-395-1635 if you would like to assist.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Chapman Lectures, (see schedule box). Tedd Levy is doing a great job lining up interesting speakers. Since this is the 150 anniversary of the start of the Civil War, we have arranged a return visit by the Civil War - Living History re-enactors for July 16th. The Garden Committee had a very successful wreath sale. They are now planning spring activities, (see Sheila Graham-Smith's report).

Health and happiness to all,

Linda



Archive specialists, Dorothy Swan, Ann Sweet, Margaret Bock

Thank You

Thank you to Barabara Aubin for her generous contribution following the Tea & Treasures sale. This was a delightful event many have asked if we will repeat it again next year. We'll see what next year brings.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Gardeners wreath sale. Sherry Eldridge, Sheila Graham-Smith and Marianne Pfeiffer did a great job gathering a variety of evergreens to create the beautiful wreaths.

Thank you to Army Hermanson and Ronnie Pedemonti (and their hospitality helpers) and Ways & Means Chair Donna DiBella for decorating the Hart House and making the Tea & Treasure sale a success. Also for the Saybrook Stroll - Open House and the annual Wassail party. It takes many hands and great hearts to make these events happen.

Thank you to Karen & Peter Dolson for cleaning out the Hart House basement. Wow, there is a lot of space down there. Also thanks to the little gremlins who shoveled snow from the walkways.



Gardener Sherry Eldridge crates a wreath

Welcome New Members

Paula & Jim Palmieri, Old Saybrook
 Edmund Mosca, Old Saybrook
 Ellen O'Herlihy, Old Saybrook
 Margaret Abraham, Old Saybrook
 Mary Lou & Bill Hermanson, East Lyme
 Daniel Leonard, Amherst, NH
 Lynn Schott, Old Saybrook
 Pat O'Brien, Old Saybrook
 Dr. John & June Willson, Old Saybrook
 Barbara Maslar, Old Saybrook
 Kevin McBride, Ledyard
 Marie Rizzio, Old Saybrook
 Christine Yanelli, Old Saybrook
 Sheila Graham-Smith & David Shaw, Old Saybrook
 Marianne Pfeiffer, Old Lyme

40th Anniversary of the Old Saybrook Torch-light Parade and Muster

Representatives of the Old Saybrook Historical Society stepped behind the Governor's Foot Guard to lead the 40th annual torch-light parade on Saturday evening, December 11th. Dressed in long warm capes and woolen coats, members and several of our high school student guides carried blazing torches and the society banner. Five and Drum corps from several Ct and New England Towns along with Christmas themed floats were applauded by hundreds of people along the Main Street parade route.

The parade and the Saybrook Stroll, held the week before, are town traditions. The historical society is proud to be part of these events.

Working Together with Other Small Museums

The Board of Trustees has approved a collaborative project with five other historical societies in the lower CT River Valley. The idea to develop and distribute a new single marketing brochure for their joint organizations is part of a Directors Roundtable Program supported by the CT Humanities Council (CHC).

This project will benefit all five societies by creating a showcase of the regions historical assets and will appeal to a wider audience. We are seeking a grant from CHC to fund this endeavor. The participating historical societies are Chester, Deep River, East Haddam, Haddam, Middlesex County and Old Saybrook.

The Lives in the Cemeteries

By Ellen Heckler O'Herlihy

What started out as a community project for the Sgt. David Thompson Society of the Children of the American Revolution has led to a long-term personal project with no end in sight and one which will benefit our organization.

Every year in early to mid May, the Old Saybrook-based C.A.R. society places fresh flags on the graves of veterans of the American Revolution in the Upper Cemetery, also known as No. Main Street Cemetery or Junction Cemetery. Having grown up in Old Saybrook and been taught local history in Mr. Reney's class in junior high, I had been in the Upper Cemetery before, though not for many years. In case you didn't have him as a teacher, Mr. Reney taught us about our town and the many people who went before us. When our class did the walking tour of Old Saybrook, we stopped at points along the way and heard the stories about the various people, places, and things that had parts in the development of what is now Old Saybrook. For me, there was one stop in particular that made an indelible mark and which, I can safely say, sowed the seeds for my personal project. That stop was at the Upper Cemetery. Here, the students were given gravestone rubbing papers and crayons and were allowed to pick out a tombstone to rub. While I can assume that this may have seemed a bit morbid to some, for me, the person buried in that grave became real at that very



The headstone of Capt. Richard Sill can be found in the Upper Cemetery, which is located on North Main Street in Old Saybrook. Capt. Sill served in the American Revolution.

moment, and was to be honored and respected for having lived. I kept that gravestone rubbing for many years and it survived many moves.

Flash forward MANY years, where I found myself in that same cemetery reliving my past and having it come alive again and take on a life of its own. While searching for those patriot graves to place new flags on, I found myself becoming curious once again about the people and their relationships to the town. These people were sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, wives, or husbands and should be remembered and respected. Since many stones were starting to deteriorate, I started to take pictures of the stones. That became an obsession and one that grew quickly. Wanting to put stones to people, I got ahold of the 1930's public works project and started to add info, especially after finding erroneous information. This led to trips to the Town Clerk's office to verify info, which led to familial relationships, which led to causes of death, etc. You get the picture, so to speak. And you WILL get the picture in the near future, because that field trip from the early 1970's and the CAR community project have led me to gather this info which I intend to turn over to the Old Saybrook Historical Society to use as they see fit.