

## Brother against Brother

*Sesquicentennial Remembrance- The American Civil War was anything but civil. It pitted states against states, families against families and brothers against brothers. It was a family quarrel turned tragically wrong.*

When Brigadier General Ben Harden Helm was mortally wounded in the Battle of Chickamauga, it sent the Lincoln White House into mourning. General Helm was the president's brother-in-law, married to Mary Todd Lincoln's younger half sister, Emelie. But General Helm commanded the Kentucky "Orphan" Brigade in the Confederate army of Braxton Bragg. He was, at once, family and the enemy. So it was in the Civil War.

When war clouds gathered after Lincoln's election, Kentucky Senator John Crittenden desperately sought yet-another compromise – something that would appease the South and hold together the ever-more-fragile Union one more time. He tried desperately to pull one more rabbit out of the hat, but it was not to be this time. Southern fire eaters preferred disunion. Northern free-soil interests would no longer give ground. The time for disunion, even at the cost of war, had come. John Crittenden's family would, dramatically, demonstrate the cost of the failure. Son George would become a Confederate general. Son Thomas would be a general in Union blue.

The senior general in the Confederate army was Samuel Cooper, born and raised in New Jersey, but husband to a southern woman. Union General George Thomas was a Virginian married to a woman from Troy, New York. He remained loyal to the Union but most of his family disowned him. In the opening battles of the war, Confederate Cavalry legend Jeb Stuart frequently found himself pursued by Union cavalry under his father-in-law, Philip St. George Cooke.



We think of the war as North against South, but it was not that easy. Every Confederate state except South Carolina contributed at least one battalion of white troops to the Union army. Northwestern Virginia remained loyal to the Union, broke with the Old Dominion and formed the new state of West Virginia. Eastern Tennessee considered doing the same and forming a new state, called Franklin. If the "Solid South" was not really solid, neither was the North. Southern sympathizers, called Copperheads, were prominent in several states. Support for the war was far from unanimous.

When a Union force attacked Port Royal, South Carolina, the lead ship was commanded by Captain Percival Drayton. Commanding the forts under attack was his brother, Confederate General Thomas Drayton. For men in the ranks, battle often got even closer and more personal.

Finally, the bitter, family conflict ended – at least the shooting part. Wounds heal, and scars fade but they never leave us. Even after 150 years, the Civil War continues to cast its long shadow upon us.

*Dave Smith, Civil War Historian*

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## President's Message

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Dear Members and Friends,

The winter winds are fast approaching, but there's still time for raking late fallen leaves and invigorating outdoor walks. This is the time when our heads swirl with holiday events and a time we are reminded to be thankful for our blessings. This year, I'm particularly grateful for the many members who have given time to the historical society's day to day activities and special projects: The House Committee for opening and maintaining the General William Hart house for summer tours, the Stevenson Archive Committee for performing the year-round assistance to visitors seeking research information, the Hart House gardeners who cultivate and weed the beautiful colonial garden, the Building Committee, the Hospitality Committee, the Ways & Means Committee and all those who have assisted with special events. It's been a busy year for the society. There are so many giving people involved to thank but I must single out the Executive Board for their generous support, Marie McFarlin, Bob Pedemonti, and Diane Hoyt. There are seven others I'd like to mention for their special help this year: Tedd Levy for the excellent job of public relations and for conducting the Chapman Lecture series, David McFarlin for spear-heading and monitoring the restoration of the Hart house basement, Donna DiBella for the her chairmanship of the spectacular fund-raising dinner at the former home of Katharine Hepburn. Barbara Maynard and Ed Mosca for rallying the community resources for the antique auto parade and luncheon celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the first bridge between Old Saybrook/Old Lyme crossing the Connecticut River. Arlene Sakatos for heading-up

the By-laws and policy review. And for our new Archivist Greg Thompson, who has brought greater interest to the Archive by teaching genealogy classes. (Another beginner class starts in March.) The Board of Trustees has enthusiastically supported all these endeavors and more. The society is truly fortunate to have such devoted volunteers. And a special thank you to AC of Essex Printing for the lay-out and design of this newsletter.

As we close-out the Civil War's sesquicentennial year with Dave Smith's article *Brother against Brother*, I'm thinking of November 11th (Veterans Day) called Remembrance Day in the U.K., where I recently visited Churchill's War Rooms. This was the secret underground London headquarters where Churchill's Cabinet directed WWII operations from 1940 until 1945. It was fascinating yet chilling, to walk through the maze of corridors and listen to actual recording from that period in history. It was chilling to reflect on living through the blitz and all the hardship and loss people suffered.

Today it is chilling to think that since the end of WWII, men and women involved in the Korean conflict, Vietnam, Bosnia, Desert Storm, Afghanistan and Iraq continue to live with healing the physical and mental wounds of war. Aren't we supposed to learn from history? May we see the coming of peace in the New Year.

I wish everyone health and happiness in 2012 and thank you all for your support.

*Linda*

## New Members

July 1 – November 1, 2011

Carolyn Bai, Old Saybrook  
Briana Bardos, Old Saybrook  
Ken & Judy Bombaci, Essex, CT  
Paul & Kathy Connolly, Old Saybrook  
Leonard Cowherd, Culpeper, VA  
Leslie Eck, Westbrook, CT  
Beth Frisbie, Old Saybrook  
Joan Jones, Essex, CT  
Jim Keating, Old Saybrook  
Diane Kutschera, Old Saybrook  
Julia McKay, Old Saybrook  
Andrew Mill, Old Saybrook  
Earl Monroe, Old Saybrook  
Kerry Ann Osborne, Wilmington, DE  
Catherine Phillips, Old Saybrook  
Susan Pianka, No. Stonington, CT  
Charlot Pike, Chester, CT  
Will Putnam, Old Saybrook  
Gordon Ringer, Old Saybrook  
Lynn Sikora, Old Saybrook  
John Sikora, Old Saybrook  
Valerie Smith, Old Saybrook  
Mary Timbrell, Colchester, CT  
Andreae Waanders, Old Saybrook  
Rev. & Mrs. Craig Whitcher, Old Saybrook  
Ann Wohlleber, No. Stonington

## Stevenson Archive

The new winter hours for the Stevenson Archive, effective December 1st:

Thursday 9-12 noon

Thursday evening 6-8 pm.

Friday 1-4 pm

or by appointment \ call Ellen 860-399-510 or

Greg 203-215-1755

### Open House

Learn the Past - Lead the Future: There will be a New Year / New Start - Open House at the Stevenson Archive Building on January 11, 2012, at 7 to 9pm.

Anyone interested in knowing more of what the Archives has to offer is invited to attend.

Starbuck refreshments in the Lobby.

*Greg Thompson*

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR Chapman Lectures - 7 p.m. at the Acton Library:**

**January 19, 2012, Richard DeLuca**, author, "Post Roads and Iron Horses" This is the first book to look in detail at the turnpikes, steamboats, canals, railroads and trolleys that helped define Connecticut and shape New England.

**March 15, 2012, Nicholas Ballantoni**, CT State Archeologist, "Connecticut Underground"

**May 17, 2012, Walter Woodward**, CT State Historian, "Witchcraft in Connecticut"



*Seated: William McLaughlin, Arlene Sakatos, Karen Emack-Dolson. Standing: Irmey Hermanson, Linda Kinsella, Matthew Rubin, Robert Pedemonti, Diane Hoyt, Edmund Mosca, Tedd Levy. Missing: Stanley Prymas*

*Happy 2012  
from the Board of Trustees*



# A Visit to Broughton Castle - Banbury, Oxfordshire, England

A Visit to Broughton Castle- Banbury, Oxfordshire, England

Broughton Castle is the ancestral home of Lord Saye & Sele.

In 1630 the 8th Lord Saye & Sele, William Fiennes joined with Lord Brooke and others in the founding of Providence Island Company and later established the "Puritan settlement called Saybrook at the mouth of the Connecticut River".



Recently, my daughter, Gabriella and I visited London and the Cotswold region. We were fortunate to have a personal tour of Broughton Castle by the charming Lady Saye & Sele, Mariette Fiennes. Far and away, this was the highlight of our trip. She regaled us with family history (the castle has been in continuous ownership of the Fiennes family since 1377) and tales of recent movies filmed there (think: Shakespeare in Love). Her Ladyship spent two and a half hours taking us about the medieval manor house, which was transformed in the 1600's into a Tudor mansion. We climbed the stone steps to the "room with no ears" where in 1639, Lord Saye & Sele and Lord Brooke plotted against King Charles I. But in the end, Lord Saye & Sele disapproved of the execution of Charles I and after refusing to sit in Cromwell's "other house" he was banished to Lundy's Island. When Charles II came to power he was pardoned and returned to Broughton Castle. For me, a memorable moment in the tour, was being asked to chose a year in history, then being handed a 1776 book called Gentleman Magazine, and read a report of events occurring in Boston that July.

The castle is beautifully sited, surrounded by a large moat, amid open-pasture land complete with grazing sheep and cattle. The gardens are spectacular even this late in the season. The 21st and present Lord Saye & Sele, Nathaniel Fiennes, is a very young 91 years. Long involved with Parliament, he is delightful, quick-witted, and very interested in American politics. We ended our visit in the Fiennes 14th century (stone vaulted ceiling)

"modern" kitchen where Lord Nathaniel Fiennes joined us for sherry and Lady Mariette checked on the bread she was in the process of baking when we arrived. They fondly recalled their visit to Old Saybrook, and well remembered the many historical society members and townspeople they met, as well as the special events and courtesies that were provided to them during the visit. It was a memorable morning with the Fiennes.

*Linda Kinsella*

Broughton Castle is open for public tours from June to October. Private tours may be arranged off-season by contacting [www.broughtoncastle.com](http://www.broughtoncastle.com).



*Lord and Lady Saye & Sele and visitor Linda*

# Historic Houses of Old Saybrook

In upcoming issues we will feature a local historic building.

Foremost dealers of antique samplers, Carol and Stephen Huber are the current owners of the property. The Whittlesey House located in the Ferry District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The following are excerpts from the Preservation Officers inventory form:  
substantiated. As the final division of property of John Whittlesey, Jr. took place

Various dates of 1740 – 1760 assigned to the John Whittlesey, Jr. house cannot be in 1750, this author has chosen to assign that approximate date. The Georgian style in which the house is built, is typical of this period. The symmetry of composition, casing of all exposed elements lack of summers on the second floor, are all common features of this style and period.

Unlike the typology developed by J. Frederick Kelly for the evolution of the colonial house plan, the Whittlesey house retained the older portion of the house as a distinct entity attached as an ell to the rear. In Kelly's typology, a one-room house in floor plan is added to with a second room to create a bilaterally symmetrical house with a center chimney enclosed by the two rooms.

Several houses in the vicinity of the Whittlesey house developed in a parallel fashion to it. The Buckingham house, now on display in Mystic Seaport, has a 17th-century ell attached to a mid-18th-century Georgian house. It seems likely that the Whittlesey house represents a strong local tradition or sentiment in the reuse of older structures.

The Ferry District, within which the Whittlesey house is located, is a distinct settlement within the town of Old Saybrook. In 1662, the General Court of Connecticut authorized the establishment of a ferry across the Connecticut River at Tilley's Point in Saybrook. John Whittlesey, a resident of Saybrook, and his brother-in-law William Dudley, from Guilford,

were appointed to operate the ferry jointly. The point of land near which the ferry wharf was located soon became known as Ferry Point instead of Tilley's Point. The Whittlesey and Dudley families received grants of land in the vicinity, and a small community based on the ferry operation and farming developed. In the 19th-century, the cluster of homes around the ferry became known as the Ferry District, after the title of the local school district. The fortunes of the Ferry



*Steve Huber and Tedd Levy walk the 3 acres behind the Whittlesey house.*

District depended very directly upon the ferry. Prospering during the 17th-, 18th-, and early 19th-centuries, the district was composed of a number of houses ranging in style from Georgian through the Greek Revival. With the introduction of steamboat traffic on Long Island Sound in 1816, and rail service in 1852, the importance of the Ferry District as a link in the New York-Boston route declined. The ferry continued as a local service, but its importance was diminished. In 1911, construction of a highway bridge rendered the ferry

system obsolete. Ironically, the construction of the Baldwin Bridge in the 1950s served to destroy much of the integrity of the Ferry District. Many houses were removed, and the local road network realigned.

John Whittlesey, Jr. was a shoemaker as well as a farmer. He also participated in operating the ferry with his father and uncle, although this was not his major source of income. Whittlesey's direct descendants continued to own the property until 1919. In 1925, William B. Goodwin, a wealthy insurance executive and relative of J.P. Morgan, purchased the property. Goodwin, believing the house to date from 1648, intended to move the older section to Saybrook Point, there to be the nucleus of a reconstruction of Saybrook Fort. 4. This grandiose failed, however, and Goodwin offered the house for sale to parties interested in dismantling the 17th-century portion and removing it to another site. Due to his intention to dismantle the house, few alterations were made to it during his ownership. Because of inadequate maintenance, the house deteriorated seriously. The house was finally sold by Goodwin's widow to John Millerbaugh, who undertook extensive rehabilitation.

## House Committee

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Your House Committee received a number of “treasures” over the past year. In December 2010 on a cold winter day, Marie and I drove to West Hartford and picked up a wonderful gift of Podmore and Walker transfer ware (Ivanhoe Pattern) china. This collection was so graciously gifted to us by Gary Wait, a longtime friend to our Society. It graced the kitchen table and was used during the past spring and summer months. Also, Dorothy and I completed the paperwork for the Hart family gifts donated to the Society by Elizabeth Putnam. These include the rocker and silhouette that belonged to the General’s daughter-in-law and are now prominently placed in the Hart Parlor. Many other items, including the Hart family tea set will be part of a permanent exhibit to be completed for the summer 2012. We also received a permanent loan from the Congregational Church of Old Saybrook of the portraits of Amos and Amelia Sheffield. Amelia’s mother was General Hart’s youngest sister. They are a beautiful addition to the dining room. Speaking for the dining room, after all the construction work was completed in the house, we sent the rug in the dining room out to be cleaned. Necessary repairs were made to ensure its beauty and retain its value. Keabian’s Oriental Rugs hand stitched in places and binding was reinforced. A new pad was purchased. Notice the beauty of this rug when you visit!



*Olga Dobbs turned 100 years young on Nov. 21, 2011. A birthday celebration with family and friends was held at Grace Church Hall. Olga and husband Frank (who passed away in 2005) were active in the society for many years. Olga lives with daughter Marion in Fenwood.*

This fall we hosted twenty volunteer docents from the Essex Historical Society. We gave them a tour of the Archives and Hart House and served lemonade and gingersnap cookies. Their comments made us stop and realize how truly unique and outstanding this Society and its campus is. Visitors came from as far away as England which makes us continue to brainstorm on how to make the house more available.

We now have a DISHWASHER!! Thank you Barbara and Bob Welsh for donating it and David McFarlin for hooking it up. Also thank you to Kathy Delmonico for polishing silver and all the student volunteers who not only docented but cleaned cabinets, shelves, etc and carried things up and down the stairs!! We have started the major inventory and cleaning of closets, etc. After completing the second floor, it’s off to the attic!! It is our goal to work closely with all committees, especially the facilities and hospitality chairs. We continue to develop a reasonable plan for the upkeep and improvements to the Hart House that is in our care and is such a wonderful landmark and treasure for our town.

Last but certainly not least...thanks to my co-chair, Marie McFarlin who puts in 12 months work in 6. The dedication on her part is widespread. Few people know all that she does to keep the Society moving ahead. We (and I) are fortunate to have her.

*Donna D. DiBella, co-chair  
Marie McFarlin, co-chair*

## Ways & Means Committee

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The Old Saybrook Historical Society hosted a Christmas Tea and Fashion Show on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 from 2 to 4 pm at the General William Hart House. Tea, sandwiches and sweets were served by Society members. The house was filled with fresh greens and decorations for the holiday season. Equator of Main Street, Old Saybrook presented a seasonal fashion show. Approximately 50 guests enjoyed the spirited event.

## O.S. Historical Society Assisting CPTV in Program on Prohibition

Tedd Levy

An unprecedented social experiment to prevent people from drinking alcoholic beverages occurred in the U.S. from 1920 to 1933 and it had a considerable impact on life in Old Saybrook.

An extensive operation to evade the law and provide liquor to prominent patrons at “Ye Castle Inn,” as well as other shoreline and river speakeasies, was launched by August Campbell Strusholm, son-in-law of Castle owners Otto and Margaret Lindbergh.

With ships that could outrun the U.S. Coast Guard, and late-night pick-up and delivery service by local residents from shoreline drop-off points, Strusholm developed one of the largest smuggling operations along the Connecticut coast. His ties to influential political figures and connections with New York-based criminal organizations ensured his success for several years.

The story of prohibition in Connecticut and particularly the activities at Ye Castle Inn and in Old Saybrook is the subject of a program currently being produced by Connecticut Public Television. Old

Saybrook Historical Society is assisting CPTV in their work in this area.

The Historical Society would welcome information regarding photos or memories of life at Ye Castle Inn during between 1920 and 1933.

### StePs-CT

Standard and Excellence Program for History Organizations

Building Stronger Museums ... Together  
We are pleased to report the Old Saybrook Historical Society has been accepted to participate in an exclusive 2 year integrated program of training, mentoring and grant funding for smaller CT museums and historical societies. StePs-CT is sponsored by the CT League of History Organizations and the CT Humanities Council in cooperation with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). We will work to achieve certification in six areas of museum practice as defined by AASLH.

*Linda*

## Antique Appraisal Night

*Spectacular! Congratulations to all who helped make this a “when can you do this again” event*

Thank you for your outstanding performance under sometimes less than smooth circumstances. Your valuable contribution made the appraisal program a highly successful event.

Thought you might be interested in knowing that the appraisers saw Charles Dickens’ first editions (very scarce), a Charles Lindbergh letter (perhaps \$600-\$1000), an 1814 publication of Culpepper’s Herbals (\$1000-\$2000); a micro mosaic of a dog (\$500-\$800), 14K gold scarab bracelet (\$3000), a 1928 excellent condition Buddy L toy pile driver (\$1000); a 2006 quilt that took 12 years to make and has won “Best of Show” awards in several New England state competitions (\$2000), a Japanese Kimono with heavy silver embroidery of cranes (that’s real silver pulled to

a thread consistency) person was told to take photos and send them to a major auction house for estimate; a small early glass vase (about 4 inches high at about \$2000), and a large ceramic bowl with Presidential symbols, probably late 1800 Chinese export which some appraisers thought might be worth as much as \$25,000 or more. Oh yes, there was also an early 1800 painting of a cross-dressed man/women (facial hair was the give-away).

In all, there were 92 registrations who received 139 appraisals ... and the Historical Society made \$695. Rather a good night for all concerned! Thanks, again, for your major contribution!

*Tedd and Karen*



The Old Saybrook Historical Society

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*Bill Childress, Bill DiBella, Barbara Maynard, Donna DiBella examine the Amos Sheffield Memoriam booklet donated to the Society by Mrs. Maynard.*

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