



Mystic River Area Burial Grounds & Stone Carvers - March 25th



Frederick E. Burdick, the Town Historian for Stonington, will give a presentation on the Burial Grounds of the Mystic River area and the stone carvers who made them. We will talk about the various family burial grounds, the gravestones, and how their style changed with the times.

Fred has been mapping and documenting the Colonial Burial Grounds of Stonington. He is the Preservationist for both the Wequetequock Burial Ground in Stonington, and the Avery-Morgan Burial Ground in Groton. He is also on the Board of Trustees for the Elm Grove Cemetery in Mystic.

He recently received an award from the “National Society Daughters of Colonial Wars” for his contributions to preserving Colonial History. He has also received “The Oakley Certificate of Merit” from the Association of Gravestone Studies, and has recently participated in a Cemetery Monument Conservation workshop held in New London at the Antientest Burial Ground by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

Fred’s ancestry goes back to literally all of the founding families of the Stonington area. He is very involved in the Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum in Stonington, and with a number of historical & genealogy associations.

At left: Headstone for Quash Williams and his wife Hannah in the Whitehall Burying Ground in Mystic, CT. This is a memorial stone placed here long after the death of Quash and his wife. Previously, marble marked the grave. Photo from the collection of Fred Burdick. granite-in-my-blood.blogspot.com

Still Spaces Left on MRHS Trip to NYC April 24-25

There should still be space for those of you who would like to join us on the trip to New York City! Please let me know promptly and I will request extra rooms. We would be delighted to have you with us and we hope you will pass the word to anyone else you know! Call Joyce Everett at 536-6339.

If you subscribe to “Travel and Leisure” or just happened to see the March 2009 issue you will have noticed the article on Milford, Pennsylvania, and the descriptions of the Pinchot Mansion, the Bar Louis at the Hotel Fauchere, and the charming shops. The MRHS intrepid travelers made it there first on the foliage trip this last October!”

The NYC Trip price for one person sharing a room is \$450, the price for a single is \$610. A deposit check of \$200 sharing and \$300 single is due as soon as possible to MRHS, P O Box 245, Mystic CT 06355. We must have 25 people to go, your deposit check will not be cashed until minimum is met. The cost of the trip includes bus and boat transportation, the hotel with all taxes and hotel fees, baggage handling, all admissions and guides, breakfast and both lunches, cancellation insurance, and snacks for the trip. This is New York City the easy way! Friday’s museums and Saturdays rides will provide seating with only brief walking excursions in between. Questions? Call Joyce Everett, 536-6339.





from the PRESIDENT'S DESK

Lou Allyn

Last month's issue of the Portersville Press included the annual reports of most of our committees. You were probably as impressed as I am by the ways in which the accomplishments of these volunteers contribute to our mission. And perhaps you were thinking "How well am I supporting Mystic's unique local historical society?"

I'm glad you asked.

These are some things you can do (give yourself a point for each one you have done in the past year):

- Go to the membership meetings; invite a friend.
- Bring an item for Show and Tell – anything that is of local interest.
- Attend the Annual Meeting and bring food to the pot luck supper (May 27th this year.)
- Read the Newsletter. Let us know if there is a topic you would like to know more about.
- Be familiar with our website www.mystichistory.org & add it to your Favorites.
- Read about the June 20, 2009 Rooms and Blooms House & Garden Tour and order your tickets now.
- Email info@mystichistory.org with questions, ideas, suggestions.
- Let us know when you change your postal or email address.
- Stop in for a visit. The Downes Building is open Tuesday and Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.
- When you're driving visitors around town go down High Street and point out Portersville Academy . Take them for a tour.

- Renew your annual membership when the letters go out in April.
- Consider being a Newsletter Patron or a Newsletter Advertiser.
- Patronize our advertisers and mention their MRHS ad to them.
- Go on one of our historical bus trips.
- Bring a child to the Family Activity Centers.
- Participate in special events such as Antique Appraisal Day.
- Take the walking tour, Mystic Riverside Walking Adventure: Self-guided History of Gravel Street.
- Consider gifts to MRHS for someone's birthday, or in their memory.
- Donate an item or two of local historical interest to MRHS.
- Talk to your other local organizations about asking us for advice on managing their historical papers and ephemera.

Whew. Did I miss anything?

MRHS Is OK on ZIP 06

The Mystic River Historical Society is a registered contributor to www.ZIP06.com "the official Web site for the Times weekly papers in southeastern Connecticut and the Shore Publishing weekly papers for the shoreline."

Go to <http://zip06.theday.com/members/Mystic-River-History.aspx> to take a look at the various options. Click on Search for Posts to see our upcoming events.

Mystic River Historical Society Mission Statement

The Society exists to collect, arrange, exhibit and preserve records, papers, photographs, artifacts, relics and related archival materials that document the history of the people who lived in the area around the Mystic River from the first settlement in 1654 to the present.

Officers:

*President - Lou Allyn • Vice President - John Porter
Treasurer - Bill Everett • Corresponding Secretary - Kit Werner • Recording Secretary - Cathy Marco*

*The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published monthly, September through May, with a combined issue for November and December, by the Mystic River Historical Society • Box 245 Mystic, CT 06355
Back issues of the newsletter are available for online viewing at www.mystichistory.org*



Who ARE Those People?

- Dorrie Hanna

Working with the MRHS collections has reminded me of a couple of things we can all do to make sure our personal family photos will be meaningful for the next generation. I can't tell you how many wonderful old pictures are in the MRHS collection without any information to identify or date them. What a shame.

PURGE the pile, digital or paper. Discard pictures that didn't come out well, that are almost the same as another picture, etc. Pick the best pictures to save, don't try to save all of them. If you can't stand to actually throw any away, divide them up and share them with your friends and family.

IDENTIFY the subjects! If you don't have the patience to include the date and location of the picture, at least try to name the folks. **YOU** know those are pictures of Jenny as a baby, but who else will know that? It's good to save some "mysteries, too, just in case. I recently connected with a previously unknown second cousin of Doug's and she and I have done well on id'ing quite a few formerly anonymous members of past generations.

SCAN & SAVE. Digital technology changes so fast that we can't be sure we're always on the cutting edge, but better to have scanned, or even photocopied, your most important pictures than to lose them forever due to damage or disaster. Burn the scans to a CD and put it away separately from the originals. The same with selected digital images.

PRESERVE WITH CARE. Use acid free pen or a soft pencil to write on the backs of pictures. Don't press too hard or you will damage the printed surface. If pictures are in albums or scrapbooks, beware of acidic paper in cheap scrapbooks (if it's old it will appear yellowed and brittle already) and those "evil" self-adhesive album pages. It's often possible to remove photos from albums and they are safer that way, but you may want to leave them on the page to preserve notes and captions. One trick is to "saw" prints off the paper by working dental floss between the picture and the page. Ideally photos should be stored flat and acid free.



A MYSTIC HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR • 2009

MRHS Chairs Joyce Everett, Dorrie Hanna and Sally Halsey, along with many other MRHS and Mystic Garden Club members, are busy planning Rooms and Blooms: A Mystic House and Garden Tour on Saturday, June 20, 2009. The houses and gardens have been chosen, the tour book is being written, and all of the details that go into an event like this are being attended to. We will need lots of help that day, from giving directions for parking to acting as docents in the homes. If you wish to help, and no one has contacted you yet, please call Joyce at 536-6339. We'll need cookies that day, people to man the MRHS table at the boutique, and people to give directions to tour goers, among other things. Let us know what you would like to do!

To buy tickets in advance (\$22 in advance, \$30 that day), go to our website (www.mystichistory.org) and click on the Buy Now button, or print out a ticket order form to send in. Or, you may buy them in person at Bank Square Books or The Whaler's Inn. Advance-sales tickets are crucial for the financial success of the tour, so please buy your tickets early.

If you would like to place an ad in the Program Book, please call Dorrie at 536-4453 and she can give you all of the information. We're planning for 1,000 people to come: an ad is a great way to show your support of your community.

Please, invite your friends and family to come to this fun event! Learn more than you already know about the history and beautiful gardens of Mystic!



Names among this group picnickers gathered for the 4th of July, 1927 become permanently lost in the annals of time as "unidentified" in this vintage photo.

February 2009 Meeting Minutes

- Cathy Marco

The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met at the Mystic Chamber of Commerce on Monday, February 9, 2009. Board members present were Lou Allyn, Tim Evers, Bill Everett, Joyce Everett, Sally Halsey, Jim Kimenker, Cathy Marco, Betty O'Donnell, John Porter, Stephanie Thorp.

President (Lou Allyn): Lou distributed a copy of IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) to all board members in meeting their fiduciary responsibility to the society.

The Connecticut League of History Organizations has provided information on available grants for preservation and educational projects. Tim will review the grants to evaluate if this should be pursued for our school programs.

Treasurers Report (Bill Everett): Bad news with Bill's computer, but Lou has come to the rescue with another computer. The good news is there's cash in bank and all's going well financially.

Corresponding Secretary (Kit Werner): There were four letters of thanks sent this past month:

- 1 for a donation related to membership renewals and newsletter patrons;
- 2 for donations to the MRHS;
- 1 to Pat Shaefer, our speaker at our January meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Buildings & Grounds (John Porter): Nothing to report.

Curatorial (Dorrie Hanna, Collection Manager): We were closed one Thursday due to bad weather and another because Dorrie was on vacation. Louisa has been on vacation also. Louisa has been focusing on improving reports from the Past Perfect database and provided Lou with a report on all items entered in 2008 (24,096 items!!).

The Curatorial Committee met on Jan. 26. Suggested as top priority tasks were:

1. Establish written policy on retention of books, newspapers & clippings, scrapbooks, negatives and also on appropriate procedure for discarding unwanted items.
2. Check, consolidate & re-label photo boxes
3. Prepare to move two shelving units, shift photo collection & supplies storage. Obtain more shelves as needed. We are now reviewing items from the Mystic Garden Club.

Education (Tim Evers): We are on track for Tuesday and Thursday programs for 1st and 3rd graders this spring. Our email list of teacher contacts is currently being updated. Emails will be sent soon.

Outreach: Lou and Helen have discussed the possibility of having a program for nonprofits on "What is important for their archives?" and will be pursuing this further. The Board agreed such a program would be very helpful to many of the nonprofit groups in the area.

Finance (David Evans): Nothing to report

Hospitality (Cindy Allyn): Nothing to report.

IT Committee (Stephanie Thorp): Barry performed the monthly system update and file backup tasks on February 1. All systems appeared to be in good operating condition and were functioning normally. Updates included Windows XP, Microsoft Office, McAfee Internet Security, and Past Perfect.

Stephanie updated the website to include the February Portersville Press. She is working on another update to include a separate page for the upcoming House Tour, Rooms and Blooms. Her target for completion of the House Tour update is 15 February.

Marketing (Sally Halsey): Press releases were submitted about the spring NYC trip and our next program with Jason Mancini. Electronic websites were updated as well.

Membership (Cynthia Allyn): We received two new memberships, the Jeff Walkers and the Wenderoths; and four renewals - MacGregor, Steere, Brannegan, & Ryan-Rose.

Nominating (Tim Evers): Kit, Jim, Tim and Lou met last week. They have been successful finding nominees who will be announced in the April newsletter for election at the May 27th Annual Meeting.

Program (Paul Ingle): Jason Mancini is our speaker for the Feb. 25th meeting. The talk will be "Hidden Histories of New London County's Indian Communities".

Special Events (Joyce Everett): The trip to New York City for April still needs two more customers. This is not a tough trip. Joyce has been working hard to make this trip a success and is optimistic the trip will be filled soon.

House Tours (Sally Halsey): "Many hands make light work". We are so thankful for the many MRHS members, Garden Club members, and community members who have volunteered to help with our Rooms and Blooms: A Mystic House and Garden Tour. Although there was one house that backed out, another has been added. We still have 13 properties: 7 houses and gardens, and 6 garden only. Everything is coming along nicely.

The organization web sites will have ticket sales available online to make it easier. Tickets are \$22 (advance sale) and \$30 (on day of event). Tickets will also be for sale at Bank Square Books and The Whaler's Inn and in tent on Gravel Street (across from Brannegan's house) Wristbands have been ordered and will serve as the ticket.

We are thrilled with the logo for the event (created by Blue Moon)... it looks great! The event booklet is being written by Helen with assistance from Dorrie and Susan Lund. Advertising in the booklet is going well but we need to sell more ads. We sent 500 letters to local businesses asking them to advertise. When soliciting area businesses, talk it up & get them to advertise in the event booklet.

The Boutique will be at Missy Evan's House with MRHS having a table. Tim and Cally Evers are organizing the operations (i.e. jitney, signs) and will be helping on a bagged lunch from St. Marks.

Walking Tour (David Evans): Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Cathy suggested a by-law change to Article III Board of Trustees concerning term limits in case of extenuating circumstances when nominees to fill positions on the board, as officers or as committee chairs are difficult to find. Although non-profits have had term limits in their by-laws, many have been amending these to allow for circumstances when finding volunteers has been harder. The board discussed the issue. It was believed that this issue was addressed during the previous by-law revision process (in 2005). Lou will research this with the parties from the last by-law revision committee and report his findings to the next board meeting.

Will we have a Patrons Party? Lou and Joyce will be working on a possible April party.

Next Board meeting is March 16, 2009. The next General Membership Meetings are February 25th and March 25th.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Marco, Recording Secretary



Volunteers Needed for Annual Spring Cleanup

- John Porter

The annual Grounds Cleanup Day will be held on **Saturday, April 25th** from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Help is needed to clean-up and re-mulch the beds, rake out the driveway gravel and generally clean-up up the property around Portersville Academy and the Downes Building. Please call **John Porter at 536-2312** to volunteer to assist.



Include your ad
HERE!

Ad Rates: \$75/Small, \$150/Large • **Patronage Rates:** \$100/Line Listing
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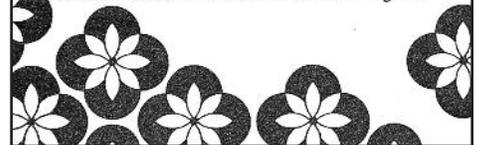
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O'Brien Stuart Eppinger & Collier, LLC

Peter F. Stuart
Attorney At Law

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CALENDAR Notables

History Exhibition Wednesday, Mar. 14, 11a - 4p
Mormon Stake House Family History Center,
1230 Flanders Rd., Mystic
MRHS will have a display table at this event.

Membership Meeting Wednesday, Mar. 25, 7:30p
Mystic Congregational Church Hall, 13 Broadway
Frederick Burdick presents "Burial Grounds & Stone Carvers of the Mystic River Area"

**PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Appraisal Day event this year. We are devoting our energies to the Rooms & Blooms House & Garden Tour!*

Membership Meeting Wednesday, April 22, 7:30p
Mystic Congregational Church Hall, 13 Broadway

Annual Grounds Cleanup Day Sat., April 25, 9a-12
Portersville Academy & Downes Building, 74 High St.
Please call John Porter 536-2312

Membership Meeting & Pot Luck Wed., May. 27, 6p

No Membership Meeting in June

Rooms & Blooms Sat., June 20, 2009
A Mystic House and Garden Walk!
Tickets are \$30 on the day of the event, or \$22 in advance, at Bank Square Books, The Whalers Inn or online or mail-in order at www.mystichistory.org

Volunteer opportunities available - call Joyce 536-6339.
Advertising possibilities - call Dorrie at 536 - 4453.



Newsletter Patrons

We appreciate the support of our 2008-09 Newsletter Patrons in covering the costs of the Portersville Press.

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Membership Updates

- Cindy Allyn, Membership Chair

Membership shifts in February include:

New: Contributing - Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Walker • Family - Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wenderoth

Renewals: Contributing - Mr. J. MacGregor, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Brannagan • Family - Rev. & Mrs. Kenneth Steere • Benefactor - Ms. Donna Ryan-Rose • Newsletter Patron - Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Brannagan

Passings: MRHS will miss Capt. William K. Yates, a member since 1979, who died February 15, 2009.

We want to be able to continue to deliver your newsletters! With our members occasionally moving to new places, changing phone numbers or email addresses, it is sometimes hard for MRHS to be stay in touch. The bulk mailing process makes no provision for forwarding or notifying us of the inability to deliver newsletters, therefore, we request that whenever address shifts occur, that you contact MRHS directly at info@mystichistory.org or by calling 860-536-4779 to leave word. Thank you!



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