Mystic Built: Shipbuilding on the Mystic River
Presented by Bill Peterson

Join us Wednesday, May 24, 7:30 p.m. at the Mystic Congregational Church

On May 24, 2023, William Peterson will present “Mystic Built: Shipbuilding on the Mystic River” at 7:30pm in the parish hall of the Mystic Congregational Church. Refreshments will be available at 7pm. The program is open to the public. The program is free for all Mystic River Historical Society (MRHS) members, with a suggested donation of $5 for non-members.

For 135 years, from 1784 to 1919, yards along the six-mile tidal stretch of Connecticut’s Mystic River launched well over 1,400 vessels. In ports around the world, “Mystic built” became synonymous with quality and beauty. William Peterson will be talking about the latest edition of his 1989 book, “Mystic Built – Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut”. The book is based on his more than forty years of research in manuscript archives, period newspapers, and historic photograph collections to describe the individual shipbuilders and shipyards, place them in their local and national contexts, expand the story up to the year 2000, and detail the histories of 63 vessels built at Mystic.

William N. Peterson was the Senior Curator at Mystic Seaport. In 2007 he was appointed Carl C. Cutler Curator of American Maritime History and Art at the Museum. He is now Curator Emeritus at Mystic Seaport. He graduated with a B.A. in History from Eastern Connecticut State University. He has lectured and written extensively about the Connecticut maritime experience. His book “Mystic Built: Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut 1784 -1919” received the John Lyman Award in 1990 for the “best book published in American Maritime history” presented by the North American Society of Oceanic Historians. He also co-authored “Historic Buildings at Mystic Seaport Museum” which received an Award of Merit from the League of Connecticut Historical Societies. In addition, he was the historical advisor and contributing writer for CPTV’s collaborative documentary “Connecticut and the Sea” which received the Connecticut Humanities Council’s Wilbur Cross Award in 2000.

Seeking Records of the Vietnam War

With the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War upon us, the Mystic River Historical Society is looking to collect information and stories from Mystic’s Vietnam War veterans. We are also interested in stories about Mystic during the war years.

The society would appreciate any veterans or families of veterans willing to share photos, letters and other items from the war so that they can become part of the permanent collection of Mystic history. Contact our archives at (860) 536-4779 to make arrangements to have your items scanned or to talk to someone about this project.

The society has a collection of information, photographs, letters and other items from previous wars in which Mystic residents have served and we believe it is time to pay tribute to Vietnam veterans in the same way.
We Invite You to Step Back in Time!

The Mystic River Historical Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year and you are cordially invited to our:

**Anniversary Gala Celebration**

*on September 24th, 2023, 4pm – 8pm*

*at the Mystic River Yachting Club*

*at the Mystic Shipyard on Willow Point in West Mystic*

There will be all the great music of the 1970s, dancing, a bountiful and abundant buffet provided by Lancer Caterers, two full cash bars, and access to a wrap-around veranda for grand views of the river and boats coming and going – including the *Argia* on her regularly scheduled runs.

Charter Members, i.e., those who were members during MRHS’ first year (1973-1974), will be our special guests.

Feel free to dust off your 1970s bell bottoms, fringed anything, boho shirts, dresses, headbands, etc.! Not required, of course, just groovy!

Thanks to the generosity of the Mystic Shipyard and Mystic Vinyl DJ, we are able to offer tickets at a break-even price of $65 per person. For anyone who is unable to attend, or would like to provide some extra support to MRHS this year, we are also welcoming donations to our 50th Anniversary Fund. These contributions will help to fund our needs and activities, including work on the Portersville Academy building, moving into our next 50 years. You will be recognized (unless you wish to remain anonymous).

Get on our e-mail list (if you are not already on it) for more information coming, including cutoff and RSVP dates. A formal invitation will be coming this summer. Want to get a head start? Your payment and reservation can be dropped off at the Downes Building (74 High Street) Tuesday mornings from 9am-noon, or Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 1-4pm, or mailed in to...

MRHS 50th Anniversary Gala
PO Box 245
Mystic, CT 06355

For more information, please call 860 536 4779.

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**Mystic River Historical Society Mission Statement**

The mission of the Mystic River Historical Society is to collect, arrange, exhibit, preserve, and promote 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 through recorded history.

Officers: President - Stephen Menno • Vice President - Marilyn Comrie • Treasurer - Stephen Menno • Corresponding Secretary - Nancy Potter • Recording Secretary - Lynn Schroder

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published five times annually: September-October, November-December, January-February, March-April and May-June

Past issues of the newsletter are available for viewing at [www.mystichistory.org](http://www.mystichistory.org)
Mystic River Historical Society in the 1990s:
Highlighting Mystic’s Unique Voices
By Lynn Schroder

The 1990s were marked by many ambitious and successful efforts and milestones but also challenges and growing pains.

Key accomplishments in this period were public outreach and progress in the archives. Public outreach took the form of more than 1,000 students participating in 1840s era school sessions at Portersville Academy (PVA), publishing a self-guided walking tour booklet as well as mounting multiple exhibitions at PVA. On the collections side, staffing and technology were put in place to professionally organize and preserve the ever-increasing acquisitions as well as the initiation of an oral history program.

Challenges were centered around staffing and expenses. It was increasingly difficult to find enough volunteers for the expanding outreach programs and needs in the archive as well as the triennial house tours and both annual and special fundraisers. Costs for cataloging and preservation were growing as well as needs related to publishing.

However, one constant across the decades was the society’s commitment to highlighting unique Mystic voices. These efforts were often spurred by new donations to the society’s archive. Excerpts were typically featured in our newsletters—either in single or across multiple issues. A notable exception was the journals of a fascinating, young Mystic girl which were ultimately published by the society in an award-winning book entitled *An Account of My Life, 1915-1926, The Childhood Journals of Helen May Clarke of Mystic Connecticut*.

Below is a sampling of memorable excerpts featured in the 1990s. First are three to commemorate Memorial Day (originally known as Decoration Day for honoring those who died in the Civil War).

Horatio N. Fish was a local resident who enlisted in the 21st CT Regiment, Co. C in July 1862 and succumbed at age 20 in August 1864 to wounds sustained at the 2nd Battle of Petersburg. What follows is a portion of a letter he sent in July 1863 to William H. Potter, his teacher at Portersville Academy.

Dear Teacher, I received your kind letter last Wednesday and right glad was I to hear from you. I have thought of you hundreds of times, thoughts and the many hours that I have passed with you in the school room, how inattentive and mischievous I use to be of the many corrections I have received, all of my own good. Would to God I could devote every moment of my time to studying. Sometimes I think all that ever I knew had been forgotten and never, til I left school did I know how to value my education. An if I get home in a year from now I shall devote sometime to my study. I must bid you adieu til next time which I trust will be soon. Remember me in the Sunday School and in your prayers. Horatio N. Fish

Charles Henry Mallory was a successful shipbuilder, born and died in Mystic (1818-1890). The following excerpt is from his 1865 diary written during the closing days of the war.

**Wednesday, February 22nd—Washington’s birth day.**
This day has become what is called a close holiday, and as the age of the nation increases more reverence will be paid to the illustrious Washington. In future generations the birthday of Abraham Lincoln will be celebrated with almost equal reverence.

**Saturday, April 15th—A fine pleasant morning.**
This morning Mr. Woodward came to the door and asked to see me—I went to the door and asked him to come in. He refused, but said “have you heard the terrible news? I said no. He replied they have killed our good President, at the same time the tears streaming down his cheeks. I was thunder struck and felt like weeping with him. It appears that last night President Lincoln with his wife went to Fords Theatre at 8:30… and at about 9:30 was shot through the head with a pistol. President Lincoln died this morning at 7:30… We cannot believe that God in his Providence has kept the President in safety through 4 years of responsibility and anxiety, such as few men in the world are called on to suffer, has permitted him to be taken at this time for some wise purpose. The nation mourns his loss. I as an individual had set him up as an idol almost in my heart.
Alla Lynne Perkins Allyn was born and died in Mystic (1892-1986). Carol Kimball, the historian for MRHS, visited with her several times. Her recollection below is of Decoration Day celebrations in Mystic.

It was a great day in Mystic as there were still many Civil War Veterans alive in the 1900s. Everyone who had flowers arose early and picked them and took them to the GAR Hall on Pearl Street. All the W.R.C. members and their daughters and even granddaughters made lovely bouquets for the graves of soldiers. A few veterans rode horseback but most of them marched all that long way to Elm Grove. Those that were too feeble to walk were taken in a horse and carriage. The parade stopped on the bridge and they threw flowers into the water and had a prayer for sailors who were lost in the war. Then they stopped at the Soldier’s monument. A big wreath was placed there and another prayer was said for the ones who were never found after the battles. Then on to Elm Grove. Some leader of the GAR always made a speech and a different minister said a prayer each year. Then the parade marched all the way to the G.A.R. Hall where the W.R.C. ladies had a big pot of clam chowder, coffee and doughnuts waiting for them.

Calm consideration of the reason offered would seem to result in finding the idea fallacious due to the fact that no water pressure service was at the time available. Hydrants? There were none until the year 1888. Nevertheless the request was presented and readily granted by the officers of the Fire District. Armed with a written order, a deputation of two proceeded to Fire Headquarters and applied for a four-wheeled hose carriage. They were met with an absolute refusal and were further warned that they would be immediately placed under arrest if they should dare to place so much as a finger on the machine. Astonished, but in no way disheartened they retired in good order from this somewhat heated encounter to the offices of T. E. Packer & Co and with other sympathizers went into a huddle. Emerging from this confab with a greater determination than before, it was decided to form an Independent Hook and Ladder Co.

The final two excerpts feature one of Mystic’s more prominent residents but in a less well-known role and one who gained recognition as a result of the society’s efforts.

George E. Tingley (1864-1958) was a renowned photographer as well as an Ex-Foreman of Mystic’s Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 for which he wrote a history in 1935.

In this era (1883) an ancient draw bridge connected the sections of the village. This bridge was operated by hand- a tedious long drawn out procedure requiring much time. All fire apparatus was located on the east side of the river. Believing that should a fire occur on the west side, while the bridge was being operated, a lamentable delay in reaching the fire must ensue, a few of our citizens began to discuss the matter. This talk finally culminated in the decision to approach the Executive committee of the Fire District with a request that one of the hose-reels be assigned to a new company - then in process of formation- with the understanding that the machine be located on the east side of the river.

Helen May Clark (1905-1989) was born in Mystic and descended from early Mystic settlers, the Burrows. Her journals captured more than a decade of Mystic’s history in an utterly charming, unique voice.

July 19, 1917—The burning of the Gilbert Block was the most exciting thing that ever happened. Downstairs were throngs of people and firemen and fire carts and hose all over everything. All the windows were out and red with fire, real flames not just a lot of smoke. The Gilbert Block is our only big building. Mr. Mark Gilbert built it. Calls were sent to all towns even Westerly and New London, and farther off some people said. People said it was a disgrace
that we had only little hand drawn carts with a building that big in town. They said the whole village would go before we got help. I was never so excited. There was broken glass all over everywhere. It was like the burning of Rome.

1990s Timeline

March 1990: Funding approved for professional cataloging.

December 1991: Monthly meeting held at PVA with heat provided by the wood stove, seasonal refreshments and costumed singers. First Helen May Clarke excerpt featured in newsletter.

Spring 1992: More than 300 local students visited PVA to experience 1840s school life as part of extensive outreach program.


May 1993: Professional librarian, Janet Godwin, hired.

December 1994: PVA classroom recreations included in Mystic’s inaugural First Night festivities.

May 1995: Walking tour booklet (Curbstones, Clapboards and Cupolas) published. Announcement of MRHS’ plan to publish Helen May Clarke journals.

July 1996: Fire damaged the attic and belfry of PVA necessitating its closure for two months.

October 1997: 25th Anniversary Fund Drive launched which ultimately generated over $30,000 to cover the cost of book printing and future outreach efforts.

December 1997: Helen May Clark journals (An Account of My Life) published by MRHS.

Spring 98: A new computer and database software as well as a specialized freezer (for storing Akeley/Jobe negatives) purchased.

Fall 1999: Board grappling with mission, staffing and funding for scope of activities, demands on archives space. A second floor for the Downes building or insulating/heating PVA was even explored.

Notable People of the 1990s: Community Outreach Program

Russell Leonard (aka Mr. Potter), Betty Ann Tylaska (aka Miss Williams), George Fearn (designed prototype and built kits for PVA reproduction desks), Arden Leach (1840s curriculum development) Helen Keith (board member responsible for Community Outreach and dol cens) and many more!

Remembering Wil Langdon, 1945-2023

By Elizabeth Boucher

I first heard from Wil Langdon a little over a year ago, in response to one of our early calls for photographs of the Mystic River Bascule Bridge. Wil was an avid photographer and, after many years spent living on the Mystic River, he had plenty of interesting photographs to share.

Since that initial call, Wil became a dedicated volunteer for the MRHS archive. He donated dozens of his own photographs (not just of the bridge, but all along the river) and worked closely with our curatorial staff to identify the vessels and individuals featured. He also worked tirelessly to research and document important 20th century history in Mystic, including major construction projects to install sewer lines in the Mystic River and renovate the Mystic River Railroad Bridge.

He was a good friend to the historical society and we are grateful for all the knowledge and history he shared with us. He will be missed.
**Mystic Then and Now: The John Mason Monument, c. 1889—1995—2023**

**Then:** The John Mason monument is pictured here at the intersection of Pequot Ave. and Clift St., c. 1890s. The statue was selected by a committee of men specially appointed by the Governor of Connecticut for the task. In September 1888, they settled on a bronze statue “of heroic size” designed by J.G.C. Hamilton standing atop a stone pedestal. The full monument stood at 20 ft. tall and weighed close to 45 tons.

The monument was unveiled to great fanfare in Mystic on June 26, 1889. The ceremony made headlines across Connecticut. The New Haven Daily Morning Journal devoted a full column to the event, noting that the entire village was decorated for the occasion and thousands of spectators from across the state assembled at the top of Pequot Hill. Governor Bulkeley arrived by a special train with his full staff, a foot guard and four companies of the Third infantry for the dedication. The Journal also marveled at the size of the monument, noting that “the size is imposing, and from it can be seen three States and four counties, fifteen towns, twenty islands and seven lighthouses.”

2005.053.0009, photo by Scholfield & Tingley, gift of Carol Kimball

**Then:** The statue of John Mason is hoisted off his pedestal by employees of the State of CT Department of Environmental Protection (now the DEEP). Note that the bottom section of Mason’s sword, visible in the photograph above, is now missing (it had disappeared years before). The monument was disassembled on May 10, 1995 and moved to the DEEP’s Marine District Headquarters in Old Lyme. It was later transferred to the Palisado Green in Windsor, CT, where it was rededicated on June 26, 1996.

The monument had been divisive for decades, but the opposition reached a tipping point in July 1992 when the Town of Groton received a formal petition to remove the statue. A 12-member advisory committee, which included local historians, Mystic residents, members of the Pequot tribe and descendants of John Mason, was established by the Town to determine the best course of action, although the State of CT had final authority on the matter. After three years of contentious debating, the Town Council passed a resolution that the statue should be relocated and the John Mason Statue Advisory Committee identified five sites where it could be moved (the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, the John Mason School, the Palisado Green in Windsor, the Lebanon Town Green and the State Capitol Building in Hartford). Windsor was selected as the site for relocation by the CT DEEP in April 1995.

1995.013, photographer unknown

**Now:** A monkey puzzle tree, planted by Jeff Richards, grows at the former site of the John Mason monument.
President’s Notes

This will be the last newsletter until September, when we will be formally celebrating our 50th anniversary. As I look back on our activities since last fall, I am very pleased at what has been accomplished since then. Attendance at our speaker meetings has been stellar (as have been our speakers!). Thanks to the research by board member Lynn Schroder, our recent newsletters have traced our notable history over the past five decades. Plus, we walked in the Mystic Irish parade for the first time to celebrate our 50th anniversary. We have also had an uptick in new memberships. I believe the visibility MRHS received from our involvement in celebrating the Mystic Bridge centennial has played a large part. Thanks to Elizabeth Boucher and Marilyn Comrie in this area.

Our speaker meeting in May will also be our annual meeting. Robert Boris is up for election to the board of trustees and yours truly will be up for re-election to the board. There are many areas where we can use some help and we will be soliciting help for various committees shortly.

Please note that our mission statement was updated by the board at its April meeting, and the new one is reflected in this issue of the newsletter. While it reads very similarly to our earlier one (it has been our mission statement since 1989), the word “promote” has been added to more fully emphasize our desire to have outreach to the community. And the 1654 date has been removed from our statement in order to account for the history of the Mystic area before the founding of the village.

Have a great summer. I look forward to seeing you at our 50th anniversary celebration on September 24 at the Mystic Shipyards Yacht Club.

— Stephen Menno

MRHS Receives CLHO Award of Merit

On April 18, MRHS Board members Elizabeth Boucher and Marilyn Comrie accepted an Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) on behalf of MRHS for their work on the “Mystic River Bascule Bridge Centennial.” The award was presented at Davidson Hall on the campus of Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).

The Award of Merit recognizes institutions and individuals who demonstrate the highest professional standards and who enhance and further the understanding of history in Connecticut. The purpose of the award is to recognize the care, thought, and effort invested in these contributions and to inspire and encourage others by acknowledging exceptional contributions to state and local history. In its letter to MRHS, CLHO said “the (selection) committee recognized what an enormous lift this multifaceted project was for a small organization, and the clear impact it had on the community of Mystic. They also appreciated the collaborations the Historical Society forged with other organizations and groups in town, and how the project used videos to extend the project’s reach. They felt that the idea behind the project – that the bascule bridge is an important historical artifact and can be interpreted as one – was a creative and excellent example of local history with an impact.”

Last year Boucher and Comrie created the extensive months long display on the Mystic River Bridge at the Groton Public Library, and authored the bridge souvenir booklet and the hard cover book Walk Your Horses that were sold by the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce. Board member Jim Streeter gave a talk on the history of all the Mystic River bridges. MRHS also served on the Chamber's bridge anniversary committee to help with the many bridge-related activities held during last year's bridge centennial, and worked with Firesite Films on their production of numerous short videos related to the bridge and its history.

MRHS has received an Award of Merit from CLHO twice before: in 1995 for its school outreach program and in 1998 for publication of the Helen Clarke diaries.

We would like to thank CT Humanities for awarding us with an operating support grant from the CT Cultural Fund for 2023.

[CT Humanities logo]
February 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Board of Trustees met at the Mystic and Noank Library February 20, 2023. Attendees: Elizabeth Boucher, Grace Cleere, Marilyn Comrie, Steve Menno, John Parry, Nancy Potter, Lynn Schroder

President (S. Menno): A motion passed to approve the 9 January 2023 trustees’ meeting notes. MRHS has received 75% of the 2023 CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant as well as the 25% balance from the 2022 grant. S. Menno performed updates and improvements to the MRHS website home page and asked trustees for feedback. L. Pyrke-Fairchild was thanked for her suggestion to have a MRHS email sign-up sheet at our program meetings. To date, the result has been three new memberships. An email to members exploring interest in board membership resulted in three potential candidates. Meetings have been scheduled as well as invitation to observe future board meetings. The president of the Westerly Library, Tom Galluscio, invited S. Menno to meet to discuss opportunities for future collaboration.

Vice President (M. Comrie): On 10 February, M. Comrie and retired bridge tender Rod Coleman led a tour and talk on the bascule bridge for a group of enthusiastic students from an East Lyme High School geometry class. Each student was given a copy of the souvenoir bridge centennial booklet. The Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce is planning several activities this year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mystic Aquarium including a 14 October fireworks display on the Mystic River. They are looking for photographs of the surrounding area on Coogan’s Boulevard prior to the aquarium’s construction.

Special Meeting Topics (Various): S. Menno provided updates for the various efforts in support of MRHS’ 50th anniversary celebration. The banner and signs to be used during the Mystic Irish Parade have been picked up. Based on survey responses, fifteen members plan to march which including board members will bring the total to approximately twenty. While costumes are not available, all marchers will be given an adhesive patch with the MRHS logo to wear. Sunday, 24 September has been held at the Mystic Yachting Club at Willow Point for the 50th anniversary social. Members will be surveyed about their likely attendance. G. Cleere will ascertain details about minimums for head count and food purchase as well as menu, elevator and dance floor availability. Laurence Potter of D.J.L.P. has been secured to provide 70s era music. J. Parry suggested production of a handout that details menu, agenda, donors etc. Work continues on accurate identification of founding members for acknowledgement as part of the 50th celebration. J. Parry will recommend a final process and list which will be sent to members.

Treasurer/Finance (S. Menno): Cash in the bank is $ 6,398.61. All 2022 tax documents have been produced and filed.

Programs (Various): Volunteers were secured for February’s talk on the battlefields of the Pequot War. The April program on rum runners may need to be cancelled due to speaker unavailability.

Corresponding Secretary (N. Potter): Eleven thank you notes were sent since the January 2023 meeting for cash donations incremental to membership, newsletter patronage, benefactor level renewals and one new life member.

Curatorial (E. Boucher): A nomination package has been assembled and submitted for the CT League of History Organizations’ annual Award of Merit in recognition of the book “Walk Your Horses” and the accompanying projects surrounding the Mystic River Bascule Bridge Centennial. Winners at the state level go on to compete for the national award. This type of recognition can contribute to successful grant applications. • The archive staff are continuing to make progress cataloging new collections and digitizing photographs to be shared online through our “public access” webpage.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): On 2 January 2023 the System Administrator performed the monthly updates and backups of the Downes Building computers and copied data files for security in an off-site location. MRHS data files in PastPerfect Web Edition were exported as CSV format and stored offsite. The computer as MRHS1 and MRHS2 were updated to the latest version of Windows 11 (Version 22H2). Norton security software was updated to the current version. Data files from both computers, including the Main folders, Desktop, Documents and Downloads folders, were backed up. Both machines were found to be working properly and driver files were updated to current version.

Membership (J. Parry): Since the January meeting, we have added four new Individual memberships (John Rabe, Marie Cox, Carol Ambrosch and Karl Jensen), and welcomed back individual member Brian McDermott. Sadly, we note the loss of three Family Members, Catherine M. McHugh in January of 2023, Dr John H. McGowan on Dec. 14, 2022, and Ann Rosemary Rose on Feb 12, 2022. • Our 2022 membership list published in the 2023 January/February Porterville Press inadvertently missed two memberships: Mark and Rachael Bundesmann (Family) and Frances Goodman (Individual). Both will be recognized in the March/April 2023 issue of the newsletter. As part of preparing the mailing labels for the 2023 January/February newsletter, corrections were made to the list of MRHS members who receive hard copies. • Moving forward, we will gradually shift to sending digital copies only of the newsletter as we rely increasingly on digital communication with our membership. However, those members who currently receive hard copies will continue to do so as will groups who receive complimentary copies and those members who do not provide an email address. Beginning on January 26, 2023, annual dues renewal letters were sent to 188 overdue memberships plus 35 Life Memberships and three Honorary Life Memberships. As of February 13, 54 memberships have been renewed, six newsletter patrons renewed for 2023 and $375 in unrestricted donations have been received. An additional 36 renewals have been received but not yet processed.

Newsletter (E. Boucher): The March/April Porterville Press will be published on 1 March. Final content submissions are due by 17 February.

Social Media (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): Posts were made in support of the January program talk on local Mystic businesses.

Next Meeting—20 March in the Ames Room at the Mystic and Noank Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Schroder, Recording Secretary

March 2023 Meeting Minutes


President (S. Menno): A motion passed to approve the 13 February 2023 trustees’ meeting notes. Guest and trustee candidate Robert Boris shared his background and reasons for interest in joining the board, and trustees introduced themselves. Two other potential trustee candidates who had indicated interest in the past appear to no longer be viable. On 25 February, S. Menno attended a meeting of Rhode Island-based historical societies. Attendees shared ideas as well as challenges including recruiting and retaining board members and engaging member participation. The next four meetings will alternate between the library’s Ames and Activity Rooms.

Vice President (M. Comrie): M. Comrie met with the president of
the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Bruce Flax, to discuss using MRHS photographs in a timeline mural being planned for the downtown Mystic tourist information center. In return, we would like to be prominently identified as the source as well as have our 50th anniversary referenced/featured in the tourist center.

Old Business (Various): S. Menno thanked all present who participated in the Mystic Irish Parade. He felt our participation met the objective of boosting visibility for MRHS and our upcoming 50th anniversary milestone. R. Boris noted that there could be an opportunity for MRHS to march in Mystic’s Memorial Day parade this year. He will provide details in the near future. S. Menno announced that given membership interest (including response to a survey) and other factors that we will plan to move forward with the 50th anniversary social on 24 September at the Mystic Yachting Club at Willow Point. G. Cleere and N. Potter will co-chair the event. Work continues on accurate Identification of founding members for acknowledgement as part of the 50th celebration. J. Parry will recommend a final process and list which will be sent to members.

New Business (Various): S. Menno plans to obtain cost estimates for interior painting of Portersville Academy. The goal is to have the work completed prior to this year’s CT Open House Day in June. It was suggested that paint chip analysis be conducted to attempt to identify and use a historically accurate paint color. S. Menno suggested purchase of vertical display materials that could be changed periodically. Members also discussed options for a new walking tour. S. Menno also solicited opinions to devise an optimal process for handling the communication of members’ deaths.

Treasurer/Finance (S. Menno): Notable increases in income since February’s report included donations accompanying membership renewals ($665), donations at program events ($412) and membership dues ($7,200). A notable expenditure was $996 for next year’s subscription to PastPerfect Web Edition website software. The checking account balance is $12,650.74.

Programs (Various): Volunteers for March’s program on the Hurricane of ‘38 were solicited and secured.

Corresponding Secretary (N. Potter): Twenty thank you notes were sent since the February 2023 meeting for cash donations incremental to membership, newsletter patronage, sustaining/benefactor/life membership renewals as well as donations in honor/appreciation of Lou and Cindy Allyn and Dr. Roger and Mildred Fowler.

Curatorial (E. Boucher): E. Boucher recommends exploring a new walking tour and PVA exhibit focused on the art and artists of the Mystic Art Colony. She met with MRHS member Jonathan Sproul on 4 March who is an expert on this topic and has an extensive collection of related materials.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): On 20 March 2023 the system administrator performed the monthly updates and backups of the Downes Building computers and copied data files for security in an off-site location. MRHS data files in PastPerfect Web Edition were exported as CSV format and stored off-site. Norton security software was updated to the current version. Data files from both computers, including the Main folders, Desktop, Documents and Downloads folders, were backed up. Both machines were found to be working properly and driver files were updated to current version.

Membership J. Parry): Since our February meeting we added one new Individual membership, Julia Davies, and three new Family Memberships: Roger and Mary Richards, Beth and Steve Kanyock and Dexter and Pearl Murphy. Sadly, we note the loss of six MRHS members: Marian Bamford Smith (26 January 2022), Robert C. Whitford (10 November 2022), Josh Burrows (7 January 2023), Mary Ann Alfano (11 January 2023), Mary Ferrier (4 March 2023) and Irma Streeter, wife of past MRHS board member Jim Streeter (11 March 2023). Since February 13, an additional 40 memberships have been renewed bringing total 2023 membership renewals to approximately 130.

Newsletter (E. Boucher): The May/June Portersville Press will be published on 1 May. Final content submissions are due by 21 April.

Social Media (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): Posts were made in support of MRHS’ participation in the Mystic Irish Parade as well as the February program talk on the Hurricane of ‘38.

Next Meeting— 17 April in the Ames Room at the Mystic and Noank Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Schroder, Recording Secretary

Portersville Academy Open House
June 10, 2023

As part of Connecticut Open House Day, the Mystic River Historical Society will hold an open house at the Portersville Academy from 1pm to 4pm on June 10. Admission is free.

There will be a display of vintage photographs from three prominent Mystic photographers: Everett A. Scholfield, George Tingley and Josephine Dickinson. There will also be displays of items from past schoolhouse days, antique tools, and various vintage household items, as well as photograph displays of the Academy and the Liberty Pole. MRHS books and vintage map replicas will be available for sale.
Events Calendar

7pm Tuesday, May 9 2023
History Book Club—MRHS & Mystic-Noank Library
Hemingway’s Hurricane: The Great Florida Keys Storm of 1935, by Phil Scot

7pm Wednesday, May 24, 2023
“Mystic Built: Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River”
Presented by Bill Peterson, at the Mystic Congregational Church
Refreshments at 7pm, Program at 7:30pm

7pm Tuesday, June 13, 2023
History Book Club—MRHS & Mystic-Noank Library
Big Sister, Little Sister, Red Sister: Three Women at the Heart of 20th Century China, by Jung Chang

 Bring a friend! All meetings are free and open to the public! Donations are always welcome. Renew or become a Member of MRHS for updates about our events. Contact us at info@mystichistory.org

Membership Updates
We are pleased to welcome new members Charles Alfano, Jr., Susan Andaloro, Amy Blumberg, Julia Davies, Stephen Glazier, Michele & Tom Cahill, Carmine & Susan De Stefano, Robin & Paul Geise, Beth & Steve Kanyock, Anne & Kevin Lawrie, Bill & Paula Mitchell, Dexter & Pearl Murphy, Steven & Susan Pettit, Roger & Mary Richards, and Dan & Melissa Verdier. Sadly, we note the loss of seven members, Marian Bamford Smith, Robert C. Whitford, Mary Ann Alfano, Mary Ferrier, Irma Streeter, and Rudy Favretti.

-John Parry, Membership