



MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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February 2006

President's Corner

The calendar indicates that we are about at the midpoint of the winter season. Thus the Museum is closed, but behind the scenes we are attending meetings, handling routine matters and planning for our 2006 opening in late spring.

The executive committee has met in order to gather input for future plans and keep informed. We had a detailed report from the treasurer and worked on a 2006 budget. As in the recent past our anticipated income is insufficient for our modest yearly plans. Again we used some investment monies to achieve a balance. Since this practice cannot be maintained over the long run, we have to consider alternatives. (We welcome all ideas, and of course monies, from any within our membership. We also hope that you keep the Historical Society in mind as you prepare, or update, your will). We are planning some fund raising events for later this year and will be considering a modest dues increase for next year.

Our new Program Chair, Norman Stevens, has done a terrific job of arranging our programs for the year. The full schedule appears below. Be sure to mark your calendar for these upcoming events. Thank you Norman for planning such an interesting and exciting array of programs.

Please check your address label on the back of this mailing. If you find a **RED DOT**, it signifies that your membership dues are delinquent. We don't want to lose you as members! Please send in your membership renewal today. We hope to see you all at future programs!

Frank Trainor, President

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2006 PROGRAMS

FRIDAY, APRIL 21: "Better Than a Poke in the Eye: An Evening of Yankee Humor" 7:30 p.m. Buchanan Auditorium, Mansfield Public Library

Rebecca Rule, a storyteller from Northwood New Hampshire, will regale us with her stories of life in the small towns of New England. Her stories are in the best tradition of Marshall Dodge, Keith Jennison, Rowland Robinson, and others of their ilk. Be prepared to laugh as you may recognize if not familiar stories at least similar incidents that you've seen or been involved in. Be prepared to share your stories.

THURSDAY, MAY 25: "The Social History of Architecture" 7:30 p.m. Buchanan Auditorium, Mansfield Public Library

Abigail Van Slyck, Dayton Associate Professor of Art History and Director of the Architectural Studies Program at Connecticut College, will discuss the relationship between social institutions and architecture, using examples drawn from her own work. That work includes the history of Carnegie libraries, summer camps, and the relationship between readers and books in libraries from the middle of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. She is the curator of an exhibit *Commerce and Culture: Architecture and Society on New London's State Street* that will be at the Lyman Allen Art Museum in New London through April 10, 2006.

Programs continued:

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8: "History of UConn" 6:00 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program, TBA

Bruce Stave, Professor of History, Emeritus at UConn, will be the after-dinner speaker at the annual meeting. He will talk about his new history of UConn, *Red Brick in the Land of Steady Habits: Creating the University of Connecticut, 1881-2006*, that was written as part of the celebration of the University's 125th anniversary. He will talk, in particular, about events and people with a relationship to Mansfield.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17: "Thanksgiving in Mansfield and Connecticut"

Location/Time TBA

This will be a theatrical program, still in the planning stages, dealing with the celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday in Mansfield and Connecticut. It will consist of a series of short readings and music that will give us a flavor of this quintessential New England holiday. Anyone with information about the celebration of Thanksgiving in Mansfield, including memorable family celebrations, or who might like to participate in this program is encouraged to contact Norman Stevens (429-7051; 143 Hanks Hill Road in Storrs; or normanstevens@mac.com).

in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This exhibit will be in the Old Town Hall building.

- This year marks the University of Connecticut's 125th anniversary. The front room of the main building will feature an exhibit showing what Mansfield was like in the 1880s when UConn's predecessor, the Storrs Agricultural School, was established.
- Gregory Cichowski's photographs showing the dismantling of the Ash house and its reconstruction on his property will be exhibited in the adjacent gallery. Some of the artifacts found during the archaeological site study will also be on display.
- Place settings and serving pieces from different time periods will be exhibited in the glass display cases in the vault area.
- A new display of Victorian planters and jardinières is planned for the furniture gallery.
- The kitchen display will focus on housekeeping in the early 1900s.

More details will follow in the next newsletter as our exhibit plans are firmed up. As you can see our plans are very ambitious and we are going to need lots of assistance to accomplish them. Beverly Beckwith has just joined the Museum Committee and we hope some others will follow her example. Please contact the museum (429-6575), if you are willing to help.

Ann Galonska, Museum Director

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

We are very fortunate to have a student intern working with us for the spring semester. Rebecca Wright is junior at the University of Connecticut. She is majoring in history and is also in the honors program. She will be assisting us with this year's exhibits while she explores a future career in museum work. We are thrilled to welcome her!

For the past two months we have been busy cataloging new accessions, caring for the collections, and trying to catch up on a backlog of other work. We also received a surprise visit from Scot Haney of WSFB-Channel 3 News in December. The Town of Mansfield was featured in one of his "Every Town has a Story" segments. The museum made its TV debut as it provided the backdrop for interviews with Betsy Patterson, Rudy Favretti and Ann Galonska. The segment aired during the holidays but a surprising number of people saw it and called to comment. It gave us some great exposure!

The museum will re-open on Sunday, June 6 and thus our attention has now turned towards preparing new exhibits. The following are being planned:

- An exhibit focusing on Czechoslovakian and Hungarian immigrants who settled in Mansfield

EMERGENCY PLANNING

We now have four resources to call on if we should have an emergency and need to move some of our valued possessions to a protected place. Given a little time, this is never a problem. With some phone calls and a few days, we could find a place to store our treasures. Our need is for hands and cars and storage spaces on a moment's notice, if it is necessary to move them out of a building with a damaged roof or broken windows.

Offers of temporary storage space and assistance have come from Carl Rettenmeyer, Howard Raphaelson, Kay Holt, and Keith and Marietta Johnson. While four of us may be enough, we should really have a longer list, in case some of us are not available when needed. We should also have enough people so that we can spread the effort to assure that no one need expend too much time or effort.

If you can help carry; drive; or have some place to store things for a few days, we need your name. Notify Ann at the museum, or Howard Raphaelson at 860-429-1340 or howardar@highstream.net. You will certainly have the satisfaction of knowing that

you are a critical part of our emergency planning. Far less likely is the chance that you will ever be called on to demonstrate this.

MORE WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- We are seeking people of Hungarian or Czech descent who are willing to be interviewed about their family's immigrant experience and/or loan photographs and artifacts for an exhibit on this subject.
- We are also seeking examples of place settings and serving pieces representative of different time periods. Please contact us if you are willing to loan samples of your heirloom china, silver flatware and/or stemware. They will be displayed in our locked glass display cases.
- We also need some volunteers to help clean the museum once a month (vacuuming, dusting, cleaning cobwebs, etc.).

Please call the museum at (860) 429-6575, if you can help with any of the above. THANK YOU!

2006 IS UCONN'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

This year the University of Connecticut is celebrating the 125th anniversary of its founding. Its precursor, the Storrs Agricultural School, was established in 1881 following a gift to the State of Connecticut of land, buildings and funds by Augustus and Charles Storrs. There is a fascinating new exhibit about the University's history located in the Wilbur Cross building on campus. It's well worth a visit.

Below are some excerpts from an article about the new school that was first published in the Hartford Times and then reprinted in the Willimantic Chronicle on August 17, 1881.



The house [the former Connecticut Soldiers' Orphans' Home] is large and admirably arranged for a boarding school. In the basement is a school room fitted with desk and black board. The laundry and furnace are also in the basement. On the first floor are parlors, family sitting room, kitchen, large dining room, and lavatory. The second floor has two or three large chambers, and some dozen or more small bedrooms, beside an attic in the ell; and there are further sleeping accommodations on the next floor

above... There are good barns and sheds close at hand, beside a small house close by for a practical farmer who is now managing the farm temporarily. With the school house there came fifty acres of land; and in addition thereto Mr. [Augustus] Storrs bought another whole farm of one hundred and sixteen or one hundred and twenty acres, making a total of about one hundred and seventy. A small piece of this, including a dozen acres or more, is a low swamp covered with young trees and shrubs; but Chas. Storrs, in addition to a gift of \$5,000 toward establishing the school, has given \$1,000 to clear this up and drain it; and that sum will fully cover the cost.

There is no such school in existence as that which is it proposed to establish at Mansfield. The great drawback to our regular agricultural colleges are the great expense attending the course, the temptations of worldly customs and vice to which the students are exposed, and the attractions which other kindred professions taught at such places, like civil engineering, afford to dissuade the student from continuing his pursuit of agriculture. Instead of filling the young men up with theoretical book learning, and a great quantity of science which may not be immediately available, at a cost beyond the means of most parents, it is proposed to have a school, at which the cost of tuition will be merely nominal (\$25 a year) and the price of board very low (not over \$2.50 or \$3 a week for thirty-six weeks.) Ample chance will be given for the boys to do extra work to pay, so that industrious and earnest students can earn enough for their expenses as they go. This is a very important consideration. The course too, will not extend over two years, a time more easily spared than the ordinary college course.... Many a farmers boy whose advantages have not been equal to his ambition, will be able to enter this institution.... His education in the grammar school branches if deficient, will be supplemented here with the right sort of tuition in addition to the special instruction in agriculture. It is proposed to have the boys do the practical work of the farm, under proper directions, with competent lectures on the different branches of farm work in connection therewith. There will be special study of the chemistry of the soil, the use of fertilizers, and a number of kindred topics indoors....

It is proposed to open the school the latter part of September, dividing the year into three terms, of twelve weeks each, and allowing a weeks vacation at Christmas and in the spring. Such students as wish to stay through the long summer vacation can find remunerative employment. The applicant must be fifteen years of age and bring certificates of good moral character....

NEWS FROM THE ACQUISITIONS COMMITTEE

Since Poppy Whitaker retired last summer, we have been searching for a new chair for the Acquisitions Committee. We are pleased to announce that Lisa Ferriere has accepted this position. Lisa is well suited to chair this committee. She recently retired after many years of working in the History Department at UConn. While still there, she completed the museum studies program at Tufts University and interned at the Connecticut Historical Society. She currently volunteers at the Wadsworth Atheneum as well as at our museum. We are indeed grateful that she is willing to take on this new responsibility.

NEW ACQUISITIONS: *Each year individuals are generous with their gifts of artifacts and memorabilia to the Society's Museum. The following list of people and their contributions in 2005 are listed in appreciation.*

Anita Bacon – 3 hand-colored photographs of Mansfield Center; **Albert Ching** – Fruit Press, salt glaze jug and 3 crocks in assorted sizes; **Julia Cook and Joyce Bonelli** (Items from the home of Irving and Justine Fellows) – Photographs of members of the Freeman, Hawkins and Stearns families, photograph of the Albert Freeman house on Spring Hill; **Ruth Moynihan** – 2 silk quilts (“Log Cabin” and “Tumbling Blocks”), 1904 Bread Maker, apron, tray, doilies; **Donald Morse** (Items from the estate of Elsie Whitehouse Erickson) – Photographs of the Atwoodville silk mill and the Congregational Church in Mansfield Center; **Patricia Gammerino** – Collection of girl's clothing from the 1950's; **Frances Hoxie** – 18th century tiger maple chest of drawers, photographs of Mansfield Center, Mansfield Hollow and Conantville; **Winston and Ethel Hawkins** – Lace collars and trims.

PLEASE NOTE: We have changed our Web site address to www.mansfieldct-history.org. We added “ct” to the address because many of the research requests we receive pertain to other towns/cities of Mansfield. Who would have guessed that there are so many Mansfields in the world!

Mansfield Historical Society
P. O. Box 145
Storrs, CT 06268-0145

Web site: www.mansfieldct-history.org
E-mail: mansfield.historical@snet.net

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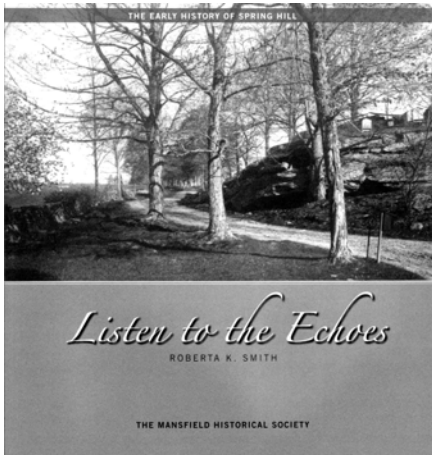
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I wish to make an additional contribution of _____ to support the Historical Society for:
 ___ Unrestricted Use ___ Publicatons ___ Other (list) _____

PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING! Check the volunteer opportunities that interest you.

_____ Host/Hostess	_____ Exhibit Preparation	_____ Collection Management
_____ Educational Programs	_____ Genealogy Research	_____ Historical Research
_____ Office Work	_____ Special Events	_____ Handyman

Please make checks payable to The Mansfield Historical Society. Mail membership form and check to: Mansfield Historical Society / P.O. Box 145 / Storrs, CT 06268.



PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE: In the past few years, the Historical Society has invested a great deal of money in its publishing efforts. In 2001 we published *Historic Mansfield Center*, followed by the updated *Chronology of Mansfield Connecticut, 1702–2002* in 2003 and the second edition of Roberta Smith’s history of Spring Hill, *Listen to the Echoes*, published last fall. We will soon be incurring further expenses with the upcoming publication of Janice Stockard’s book on the local silk industry.

Please support our publishing program by purchasing our books. They make fine gifts as well as excellent additions to your own library. Books can be purchased at our museum, the Mansfield Town Clerk’s Office, the Mansfield General Store, The Altnaveigh Inn or by using the order form below.

Donations towards our publishing efforts are always welcomed. You may use the membership form above and just fill out the contributions section.
Thank you for your support!

I would like to order: _____ *Listen to the Echoes* @ \$18.00 (plus \$2.50 shipping).
 _____ *Chronology of Mansfield, 1702-2002* @ \$23.00 (plus \$3.50 shipping)
 _____ *Historic Mansfield Center* @ \$20.00 (\$3.00 shipping)

(Shipping costs will be pro-rated for multiple book orders. Please contact us before placing your order.)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Please send order & check to:

Mansfield Historical Society
 P.O. Box 145
 Storrs, CT 06268