



MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 45, No. 4

November 2009

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We begin the 2009-2010 year renewed by an enjoyable summer season that included four new exhibits and displays at the Know Your Towns Fair and the Festival on the Green. We concluded with our busiest day of the year on our closing day, September 27. For those who missed the annual dinner meeting on September 25, I share with you a few announcements:

George Gurley Society. At the annual meeting, we announced the formation of the George Gurley Society in recognition of those persons contributing to the Society through their estate planning. The Society is named for George Gurley, whose bequest thirty years ago continues to support the Society. If you would like to remember the Historical Society in your estate planning, please feel free to contact Ann Galonska or me about the Gurley Society.

Board Election: The following board members were elected to second terms: John Meyers, President and Members-at-Large, Keith Wilson and Dick Roberts.

Wormwood Hill – New Book: We are pleased to announce that Rudy Favretti and Isabelle Atwood have published a book entitled *Wormwood Hill: Its Settlement and Growth, Including Mount Hope and Atwoodville*. The Society is most grateful to Isabelle and Rudy for donating all proceeds from the book to the Mansfield Historical Society.

Annual Fund. At the last board meeting, a decision was made to move the Annual Fund to the spring of 2010 in advance of the new season. We ask that members consider an end of year gift in addition to their membership.

Membership Renewal. Please take a few minutes to renew your membership in the Society. We look forward to another eventful year of programs and exhibits.

Transitions: We thank Ian Mills for his contributions to the Historical Society's website, reproduction policies, and membership structure. Ian brought a passion for Mansfield's history and great energy to the Society. For anyone considering travel to France, you can visit his award winning site: www.DiscoverFrance.net. For the interim, Bruce Clouette has taken over management of our website and we thank him for his efforts on this project.

Fred A. Cazel, Jr., who served as the first President of the Mansfield Historical Society, has completed service as Program Chair. Fred planned the 2008-09 programs, helping us bring Walter Woodward, our State Historian, to Mansfield on November 13. The Society recognized Fred for his 50 years of service in September 2008.

Should you have any suggestions or thoughts on these and other matters of interest, please contact Ann Galonska or me via mail, phone (429-6575) or e-mail (mansfield.historical@snet.net).

John Meyers, President

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! – Upcoming Events

Friday, November 13, 7:00 p.m.: State Historian Walter Woodward presents “NEW ENGLAND'S OTHER WITCH HUNT.” Buchanan Auditorium, Mansfield Public Library (Route 89, Mansfield Center)

Wednesday, December 2: HOLIDAY BUS TRIP – The excursion includes a special tour of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, luncheon at the historic Griswold Inn in Essex and a narrated bus tour of historic sites Essex, Old Saybrook and New London.

CONNECTICUT STATE HISTORIAN TO SPEAK AT NOVEMBER 13 MEETING

At our November meeting, State Historian Walter Woodward will speak on the terrifying and deadly witch panic in Hartford that took place a generation before the Salem witch trials. Between 1647 and 1663, Connecticut's magistrates and Puritan ministers zealously prosecuted alleged witches. The Hartford witch hunt began in 1661 when an eight-year-old girl died after claiming that a local woman, Goody Ayres, was "pricking her with pins." Over the next three years there were eight trials and four women were executed. Dr. Woodward will bring the events surrounding the witch hunt to life with a multimedia exploration of the context, actions, and consequences of this horrific event.

Dr. Walter Woodward became Connecticut's fifth state historian on July 1, 2004. Since that time, he has traveled throughout the state meeting with educators, museum professionals, academic historians, family historians, genealogists, and the public promoting the importance of Connecticut's vital and ever evolving heritage.

In addition to promoting communication and collaboration among the state's diverse cultural heritage institutions, Woodward also serves as an ex-officio member of several state boards involved in history, tourism, and cultural affairs. Dr. Woodward is a resource on state history for journalists, legislators, teachers, and researchers as well as a promoter of significant historical events.

The state historian is appointed by the University of Connecticut board of trustees and is a faculty member of the university's history department. Dr. Woodward is an assistant professor located at the University's Greater Hartford campus. His areas of special expertise are Early American/Atlantic World history and the history of Connecticut.

Prior to changing careers to become a historian, Dr. Woodward was a composer of hit country music songs, music for television and film, a commercial jingle writer and producer, and the owner of an advertising agency. He won two Emmy awards for television documentary composition. In advertising, he won eight Clio awards, the advertising equivalent of the Oscar, and an award for "the best radio commercial in the world" from the International Radio and Television Society.

Dr. Woodward received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 2001 and joined the history department at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania before becoming Connecticut's State

Historian. He has published numerous articles on early American and Connecticut history, history education, and is currently writing a book about the life of John Winthrop Jr., who was a founder of New London and the governor of the colony for eighteen years in the 17th century. Gov. Winthrop, in his role as chief court magistrate, also played a significant role in defusing the deadly impact of the Connecticut witch trials.

HOLIDAY BUS TRIP TO OLD LYME, ESSEX AND NEW LONDON



The Historical Society is sponsoring a holiday bus trip to Old Lyme and the southeast Connecticut shoreline on Wed., December 2, 2009. The excursion will feature a morning tour of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. This National Historic Landmark was deemed the center of American Impressionism in the early 20th century. Beginning in 1899, Florence Griswold opened her family home to artists searching for a quiet country retreat where they could rejuvenate their spirits and find sources of inspiration. This group became known as the Lyme Art Colony.

After 14 months of restoration, the Florence Griswold House reopened to the public in 2006. The \$2.5 million project preserves Miss Florence's boarding house and allows visitors to fully immerse themselves in the culture and daily life of an American art colony unlike anywhere else in this country. The House and surroundings are accurately furnished to its appearance circa 1910, when the colony was the center of Impressionism in America.

We will enjoy a guided tour of both the Florence Griswold house and the Robert and Nancy Kriebel Gallery that opened in 2002. The main floor of the Griswold house will be seasonally decorated, evoking the homespun preparations of a 1910 Christmas in a boarding house for artists. Historically accurate decorations reveal incredible creativity with the use of surprising materials. The highlight of the decorations is a spectacular 12-foot Christmas tree. In the Kriebel Gallery, a group of talented designers and artists have lavishly decorated Fantasy Trees inspired by the current exhibition, *Call of the Coast: Art Colonies of New England*. The museum also has a wonderful shop where you just might find that special holiday gift.

Following our museum tour, we will travel across the Connecticut River to dine at the historic Griswold Inn in charming Essex, CT. The "Gris" is

one of the oldest continuously operating inns in the country, catering to locals since 1776. The entrée choices are: *Pan-Seared Breast of Chicken with Sun-Dried Tomato & Boursin Cheese* OR *Slow Roasted and Carved Top Sirloin of Beef with Mushroom Demi Glace* – each served with hot rolls, potato, vegetables and hot cobbler for dessert.

Following lunch, you can sit back and relax as we enjoy a special narrated bus tour of the Essex, Old Saybrook and New London area presented by a knowledgeable step-on guide. Some of the highlights to be covered will be shipbuilding in Essex, Katharine Hepburn's Old Saybrook and Fenwick, Fort Trumbull, the Coast Guard Academy, and literary light Eugene O'Neill.

The cost of the trip is \$72 per person (based on 40-52). The bus will depart at 9:30 a.m. from the Mansfield Historical Society, located at 954 Storrs Road (Route 195). It will return at approximately 5:30 p.m. Parking is available behind the museum.

We hope you will join us on this fun excursion. To reserve your spot, please mail the enclosed reservation form with your check to the Mansfield Historical Society, or contact us at (860) 429-6575, mansfield.historical@snet.net. **The reservation deadline is November 12.** Please indicate your meal choice when you make your reservation. This excursion is arranged through Friendship Tours of Bloomfield, CT.

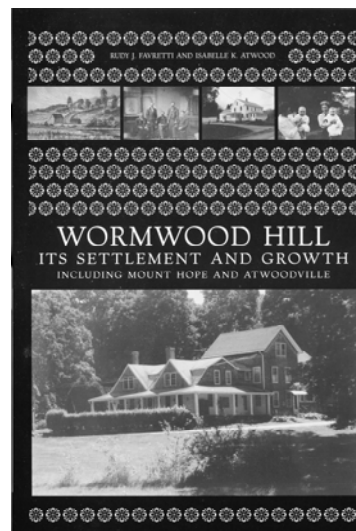
WORMWOOD HILL – HOT OFF THE PRESS

A new book is hot off the press just in time for the holidays! It is entitled *Wormwood Hill: Its Settlement and Growth, Including Mount Hope and Atwoodville*, by Rudy J. Favretti and Isabelle K. Atwood, two of our members.

This 118 page book, with 65 illustrations, has six chapters. They cover the 18th century settlement of Wormwood Hill, its further development in the 19th Century with a church, school and other amenities, and then the resort era of the 20th century. Another chapter, written by Isabelle, recalls life on the Hill in times past.

Because Wormwood Hill was an agricultural community it relied on Mount Hope and Atwoodville, both mill villages, for part of its existence. Each of these hamlets merit a chapter in the book with highlights of their history.

This is not a dull history book. It includes murders, sex scandals, stories about bootlegging during prohibition, and the community as a host for a long list of fascinating people, from a poet laureate of the United States to one of the Monkees.



You will want to read this book and buy it for your friends and family for holiday gift giving. It will sell for \$15.00, and the authors have decided to donate the proceeds to the Mansfield Historical Society. **There will be a book signing at the November 13th meeting.**

MUSEUM CLOSED BUT WORK GOES ON

We just concluded another successful season at the museum. There was a steady stream of museum visitors throughout the summer. We attracted visitors from throughout Connecticut and New England, with some coming from as far away as California. The First Baptist Church's 200th anniversary exhibit drew many from the church community and we even gained a few new members from this group. Now we turn our attention to caring for the collections and preparing new exhibits.

At its last meeting, the historical society's board voted to change the museum's open days next year from Thursday and Sunday to Saturday and Sunday. Visitation on Thursdays has typically been low. We hope this change will make our museum more accessible and will further boost our visitation.

We were very fortunate to have a number of student interns this past year but this is not always the case. We do not have any interns for the fall semester and as of now, there are none lined up for next spring. We just can't depend on this outside help always being available.

The museum really needs more help from our members. We especially need help with preparing exhibits and caring for our collections. Many items entered the collection over the past two years and they are still waiting to be cataloged and properly stored. We would also like to do more educational outreach to the schools and larger community. But this can't be done without more manpower. Please consider joining our museum, acquisitions or education committees. Let John or me know if you are interested in helping.

Ann Galonska, Museum Director

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REMEMBER!	November 13 –Meeting & Program	December 2 – Holiday Bus Trip
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AND THE WINNERS ARE...

At the Know Your Towns Fair, the Festival on the Green and our annual meeting, we presented participants with a list of 10 events and 10 people important to the town’s history. They were asked to select the three that they thought were most significant. It was a fun way to learn a bit about Mansfield’s history. Here are the results, with some surprises!

TOP 3 HISTORIC MANSFIELD EVENTS:

1st	1881 - Charles and Augustus Storrs offer 170 acres of land, buildings and \$5,000 to the State of Connecticut to establish the Storrs Agricultural School, the precursor of the University of Connecticut.
2nd	1760 - Nathaniel Aspinwall plants the first mulberry orchard in town and introduces silk culture to Mansfield. The idea takes hold and over the next 80 years, Mansfield leads the nation in silk production.
3rd	1703 - Mansfield is incorporated as a town.

TOP 3 HISTORIC MANSFIELD PEOPLE: A three-way tie for third place

1st	Wilbur L. Cross - A native of Gurleyville, he served as Governor of Connecticut from 1931 to 1939.
2nd	John & Eugene Atwood - Inventors and founders of the Atwood Machine Company. The company became the world’s largest manufacturer of silk machinery after moving to Stonington in 1878.
3rd	Experience Storrs - Under his leadership, 93 Mansfield men marched to the Boston area in 1775, in response to the “Lexington Alarm.”
3rd	Edwin Fitch - Noted 19 th century Mansfield architect and builder. Among his many works are two Mansfield Center landmarks – the Congregational Church and his own home, now The Fitch House B&B.
3rd	Xiangzhong (Jerry) Yang - In 1999, he successfully cloned a calf named Amy at the University of Connecticut. It was the first farm animal cloned in the United States.

RESERVATION FORM: Holiday Bus Trip - Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ (Make checks payable to Mansfield Historical Society)

Meal Choice: _____ Chicken _____ Beef

RESERVATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 12

Mail reservation form and check to: Mansfield Historical Society / P.O. Box 145 / Storrs, CT 06268.

Now is the time to renew your membership for 2009-2010. Please support your Historical Society!

MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

Student (\$10) _____
Individual (\$20) _____
Family (\$30) _____
Sustaining (\$50) _____

Small Business (\$75) _____
Contributing (\$100) _____
Patron (\$150) _____
Corporate (\$250) _____

I wish to make an additional contribution of _____ to support the Historical Society.

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

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ Host/Hostess | _____ Exhibit Preparation | _____ Collections |
| _____ 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.