



# MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 47, No. 3

September 2011

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

In his travels through 19<sup>th</sup> century America, Alexis de Toqueville observed that in towns around a then young country, “it is impossible to prevent men from assembling, getting excited together and forming sudden passionate resolves.” When I think of the Mansfield Historical Society, I think of the resolve of its founders, men and women, gathering (in 1957) at the home of Fred and Annarie Cazel to establish a newly formed association, one committed to the preservation and promotion of Mansfield’s history.

On July 26, 2011, Fred A. Cazel, Jr., passed away. A scholar, a man of public service and strong ideals, Fred was above all, a gentleman and part of the bedrock of the Mansfield community. It came as no surprise that we learned that Fred had bequeathed his beloved Gurleyville home and gardens to the Mansfield Historical Society, for the Society to consider its potential use or, from its sale, a consequent fund to support our core activities. We are forever grateful to Fred and Annarie Cazel for their founding vision and lasting commitment to support Mansfield’s history.

It is a history that some 100 new members will come to know and enjoy. The Society’s town-wide mailing has brought scores of new members, many of whom joined us for the June opening featuring a Civil War enactment group and a performance by musician Rick Spencer. For those who missed the opening, we invite you visit the Museum’s exhibit on Mansfield and the Civil War featuring Keith Wilson’s profiles of the 150+ men who served in the Union army – a must for any young student taking American history or local history buffs.

*(Continued on the following page)*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS! – UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Friday, September 30, 6:00 p.m.: ANNUAL MEETING, DINNER AND PROGRAM**

Tom Kelleher, of Old Sturbridge Village, will present “Taverns and Tavern Life in Early New England.” Event will be held at the First Church in Christ in Mansfield Center. (Details follow on the next page)

### **Saturday, October 1, 1:00 p.m.: WALKING TOUR OF MERROW**

Walktober event co-sponsored by the Willimantic River Alliance and the Mansfield Historical Society.

### **Sunday, October 9, 2:00 p.m.: MUSEUM PROGRAM ON COLT REVOLVERS**

Society member and Colt gun collector Frank Wemple will display and discuss his collection of cased Colt percussion revolvers.

### **Friday, November 18, 7:30 p.m.: NOVEMBER MEETING & PROGRAM**

Walter Woodward, Connecticut State Historian, will present “Handed Down in Song: New England’s Past as Captured in the Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection.” (Details will follow in the next issue of the newsletter)

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER continued:**

Museum Director Ann Galonska and I look forward to welcoming you to future programs, including the annual dinner, featuring a lively talk on tavern life in early New England. We always welcome your comments and suggestions at the Museum or through [mansfield.history@snet.net](mailto:mansfield.history@snet.net).

And just a gentle reminder – this is the time of year that membership renewals for 2012 are due. The membership form is enclosed in this newsletter and we look forward to your continued support. Please note that new members who joined after March 1, 2011 do not have to renew their memberships until next year.

*John Meyers, President*

## **ANNUAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 30**

Our annual dinner meeting will be held on September 30 at the First Church of Christ in Mansfield Center (Rtes. 89/195). Following a delicious dinner and a brief business meeting, Tom Kelleher of Old Sturbridge Village will present a talk on “Taverns and Tavern Life in Early New England.”

Taverns were as numerous as churches in early New England, and played at least as large a role in the public life of the community. From the food and drink to the songs sung by the fireside, this talk will look at what it was like inside the “public houses” that dotted the highways and center villages of virtually every town in New England.

Tom Kelleher is currently Curator of Historic Trades, Mills, and Mechanical Arts at Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. In over twenty-six years at that premier living history museum, he has worked as a costumed historical interpreter, trainer for the cooper shop, supervisor of the mills, coordinator of historic trades, research historian, program coordinator, and managed staff training. Tom has researched and developed dozens of historic characters and programs, which he has presented at scores of museums, schools, and historical societies around the country. He has also taught a variety of craft skills and historical subjects to museum staffs as well as the general public and at teacher workshops throughout the United States and Canada. Active in a number of professional organizations, including the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums where he served two terms on the board of directors, Tom has conducted training for interpreters, teachers, docents and guides at over a dozen parks and museums.

Before entering the museum field, Tom taught social studies at the secondary level in Norwalk, Connecticut. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in history and education from Western Connecticut State College, and a Master's degree in history from the University of Connecticut. More recently he became a Registered Nurse. His writings on technology, history, historical drama and other museum-related topics have been published in several journals, books and popular magazines.

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE DINNER.** Please send in the enclosed reservation form or call the museum (860-429-6575) by **September 26** to reserve your spot.

**Those who wish to attend the program only should arrive at 7:30 p.m. There will be an admission fee of \$3.00 at the door for non-members who are not attending the dinner.**

## **CELEBRATE THE 200<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE MERROW MILLS!**

As part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Walktober events, the Willimantic River Alliance and the Mansfield Historical Society are co-sponsoring a walking tour of Merrow on Saturday, October 1. Merrow was once home to a gunpowder factory, followed by a stockinet mill that boomed during the Civil War years. The mill produced nearly 400,000 pairs of socks for the Union army. The company also developed the first overlock sewing machine that later became its main business. This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first mill in Merrow – the gunpowder works completed in 1811.

Come discover this 19<sup>th</sup> century mill and village with mill historian Bill Jobbagy. Tour the small village and walk along scenic Riverview Trail to see remains of the Merrow gunpowder works and knitting mill (one-mile round trip). This is an easy 1½ hour walk to be followed by a visit to our museum to view the Merrow exhibit and enjoy refreshments.

The walking tour begins at 1:00 p.m. From the junction with Route 195 in Mansfield, go south on Route 32 for eight-tenths mile. Turn right onto Merrow Road, cross the bridge and then turn right to park on Riverview Drive.

## **CASED COLT PERCUSSION REVOLVERS**

During the era of the percussion revolver in the mid 1800s, many Colt handguns ended up in fancy partitioned cases with several accessories.

These cased sets are pretty to look at and they are highly collectable in antique gun circles.



On October 9, 2:00 p.m. at the museum, Colt collector Frank Wemple will make a presentation about cased Colt revolvers. We'll consider some of the common questions surrounding these sets such as: Did Colt make the boxes? Were all cased Colt revolvers assembled and sold by Colt? What accessories are correct for certain revolvers? If I want to buy a cased Colt revolver, how can I tell if a set is correct and original? Some of these questions have clear answers while the answers to others are murky at best. This will be a "show and tell" presentation and several cased Colt revolvers will be on display.

### **MUSEUM CIVIL WAR EXHIBITS OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 25**

The museum officially opened for the season on Sunday, June 5 and has been a busy place since then. We had a very successful opening day with well over 100 visitors. In commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, a group of Civil War re-enactors set up camp on the museum grounds and several times during the afternoon they drilled and gave shooting demonstrations in the parking lot behind the museum. The re-enactment group represented Company D of the 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry in which at least 40 men from Mansfield served. In addition to the encampment activities, Rick Spencer gave a rousing performance of songs from the Civil War era and related their history.

If you have not already done so, we urge you to visit the museum before it closes for the season on Sunday, September 25. Don't miss our new exhibit, "Service and Sacrifice: Mansfield in the Civil War" and the new displays on the villages of Mansfield

Depot and Merrow. The exhibit on the Connecticut Soldiers' Orphans' Home that had been planned for this year was postponed until next spring to provide more space for the extensive Civil War display.

We especially want to recognize the following people who prepared this year's exhibits.

- Keith Wilson who researched and wrote the biographies of almost 200 Mansfield men who served in the Civil War – an extraordinary accomplishment! He also prepared the text for the military portion of the exhibit.
- Cathy Wright who researched and wrote the text describing life in Mansfield during the Civil War.
- Rudy Favretti who prepared the exhibit on Mansfield Depot, and also Jan McCollum and Penny Hunt who created and loaned the extensive model of Mansfield Depot.
- Vicky Wetherell, Ann Galonska and student intern Jennifer Lewis who were responsible for the Merrow exhibit.
- And Stephen Feathers, Ann Galonska and Jennifer Lewis who prepared and mounted all the exhibit materials.

We also want to thank the many people who loaned items, provided information or assisted in other ways.

- Alan Crane who arranged for and coordinated the Civil War re-enactment group activities.
- The following people who loaned photographs and/or artifacts for the Civil War exhibit: Janet Atkins, Patrick Clark, Alan Crane, Kathy James-Stebbins and Jim Stebbins, Jay Osorio, Frank Wemple, Keith Wilson, and Gary Wittig.
- Dean Morey and Phyllis Swanson who shared valuable information for the Civil War exhibit.
- The following people who provided photographs, materials and information for the Merrow exhibit: Mike Gergler, Bill Jobbagy, Chris Kueffner, George Merrow, The Merrow Sewing Machine Company, Vicky Wetherell, and the Windham Textile and History Museum.
- Pete Vertfeuille who assisted with photo production for the Merrow exhibit.
- And special thanks to Calvin S. Wilcox for sharing so many of his memories and photographs of Merrow.

We truly appreciate the contributions of everyone who helped to make this year's exhibits and opening day event happen. **THANK YOU TO ALL ON A JOB WELL DONE!**

**IN MEMORIAM  
FRED AUGUSTUS CAZEL, JR.**

Fred A. Cazel, Jr. was born February 25, 1921 in Asheville, North Carolina. Always a stellar student, he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from which he graduated with highest honors in history. He was then accepted at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore to study under his distinguished mentor, the medievalist Sidney Painter. He concentrated in medieval history, especially English constitutional law. His college years were interrupted by service in the United States army during World War II.

During his studies at Johns Hopkins, Fred met Annarie Peters, from Cincinnati, also a doctoral candidate, but in classical and archaeological studies. After the completion of their degrees and marriage in 1948, Fred accepted a position in the history department at the University of Connecticut, a position he held until 1988.

While at the University, Dr. Cazel advanced rapidly to the rank of professor. He also served in many other capacities such as chairman of the Faculty Senate executive committee, moderator of the Faculty Senate, and grand-marshal of the annual commencement exercises, a position he held with great pride and honor. After his retirement from the University, Fred led biennial tours to the British Isles and elsewhere, as fund-raisers for the Museum of

Natural History at the University. Fred was an ardent traveler having visited most corners of the world as well as practically all of the United States. This busy schedule did not preclude his creation of a beautiful garden at his home in Gurleyville.

Fred also found time for many community activities. In 1957, the Mansfield Historical Society was organized in his and Annarie's living room in their recently purchased Royce-Dunham house in Gurleyville, built in 1735. He not only served as the Society's first president, but also acted in that capacity for two other separate terms, as well as the Society's program chairman for a period of time. In 1983, he was appointed to serve on the Mansfield Town Council to fill the term held by his wife, Annarie, before her untimely death that year. In 1991, he was elected mayor of Mansfield, a position that he held until 1997.

We will certainly miss Fred who has played such a large role in the Historical Society from its very inception. We will always be grateful to him for his leadership, vision and service to the Society. Through his generous bequest to the Society, his legacy will continue.

*The Mansfield Historical Society is grateful to Rudy Favretti, a friend to the Cazel family for some five decades and a former Society president, for serving as steward for the Cazel house and property. We are very appreciative of Rudy's efforts in overseeing the property.*

**OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS HELP IN SO MANY WAYS! SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

- Vicki Daniels, Joan DeBella, Kay Holt, Nancy Rucker, and Marty Yutzey who helped clean prior to our opening.
- Joan DeBella and Kathy Stebbins who coordinated refreshments for our opening; also the many people who provided refreshments.
- Isabelle Atwood who has spent countless hours recruiting our hosts and hostesses. Thanks also to all those who volunteered to host.
- Nancy Rucker and members of the Garden Gate Club who have beautified our grounds with plantings and maintained our gardens throughout the summer.
- Ethan Oliver who helped with cataloging Scouting artifacts and also re-painted the basement floor as a Boy Scout community service project.

**HELP WANTED: The Historical Society is in need of a new Webmaster.** We need someone who can keep our website current by maintaining the calendar of events and adding new materials. If you are willing to help, please contact the Historical Society at (860) 429-6575 or [mansfield.historical@snet.net](mailto:mansfield.historical@snet.net).

**RESERVATION FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER**  
**Friday, September 30, 2011**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for dinner. Enclosed is a check made out to the Mansfield Historical Society in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ at \$16.00 per person.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken meal (Salsa Chicken)                      \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian meal

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send to:**  
Mansfield Historical Society  
P. O. Box 145  
Storrs, CT 06268

**RESERVATION DEADLINE is September 26, 2011**

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**MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2011-2012**

**PLEASE NOTE: New members who joined after March 1, 2011 do not need to renew at this time.**

**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.**

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

**Web site: [www.mansfieldct-history.org](http://www.mansfieldct-history.org)**  
**E-mail: [mansfield.historical@snet.net](mailto:mansfield.historical@snet.net)**

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**PLEASE SUPPORT THE MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY. REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR DUES!**

### **WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!**

**Since the publication of our last newsletter, the following people have joined the Society.**

Louise Bailey and Robert Montes  
Barbara A. Baribeault  
Robert Bee  
Heather Bortfeld  
Ruth Buczynski  
Darren, Shannon and Harrison  
Cook  
Thomas and Francine DeFranco  
Ed Dorgan  
Gwen Duff  
Renée Ferriere  
Mary Kay Fontaine  
Karla and Martin Fox  
Tip Garritt  
Janet Generous  
John, Carolyn and Nate Holmy

Jane M. Jackman  
Careen Jennings  
Mark and Toni Kirk  
Peter, Ben and Alex  
Kochenburger  
Henry and June S. Krisch  
Stacy and Bob Malecki  
Terry and Tom Nielsen  
John, Jen, Ethan and Erica Oliver  
Gregory Padick and Patricia  
Swords  
Bill and Mary Pearson  
Kris, Gail, Rachel, Joseph Perry  
Elyse Poller and Gerald Dunne  
Glen Quesnel  
Anne and Tony Rash

Rachel & Michael Rosen-Collins  
Wilma and James Schweppe  
Jonathan and Gwendolyn Sgro  
David and Lina Simonu  
Virginia R. Smith  
Kristina and Richard Staron  
Barbara Swol  
The Juel-Larsen Family  
Vera S. and Clifford O. Ward  
Tom and Martha Ward  
Michael Weitz and Kate and  
Mary Knight  
Theresa Williams-McCollum  
Fred and Shari Zwick