



The Acorn

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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June 2013

The War of 1813 Annual Meeting to Explore Commodore Decatur's Winter in Gales Ferry

The year 2012 is over, so one might be excused for thinking the bicentennial celebrations for the War of 1812 have ended. Nothing could be farther from the truth, as Ledyard's part in the war didn't begin until June 1813.



That was the month that Commodore Stephen Decatur, commander of a small fleet in Long Island Sound, found himself

avoiding British warships sighted near Block Island. The fleet sought refuge in New London Harbor, there to find themselves stuck. Failing to arouse much sympathy with citizens near the coast, the Commodore moved his ships upriver to Gales Ferry, where they would spend the winter and build fortifications on what we now call Mount Decatur. During his winter in Gales Ferry, Stephen Decatur lived at the Niles Mansion on Kings Highway and is said to have taught navigation to midshipmen at Ichabod Cottage on Hurlbutt Road.

Our annual meeting in June is an appropriate time to observe the bicentenary of Decatur's arrival on the mountain that now bears his name. Town historian Kit Foster will give an illustrated lecture, and, as a special treat, Tom Callinan, Connecticut's first Official Troubadour, will perform for us a ballad he has written about the Commodore's arrival in New London and winter at Gales Ferry. Callinan, now a resident of Norwich, has been working on an extensive program of diverse songs about the War, of which this new work forms a part.

The meeting will be held Sunday, June 9th at the Ledyard Senior Center, 12 Van Tassel Drive in Gales Ferry, beginning at 2:00 PM. Elections will be held, reports heard, business transacted and refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to the public, so come and bring a friend.

New Attractions for the Old Fashioned Fourth

For the past five years, the Society has held an Old Fashioned Fourth event at the Nathan Lester House on the Fourth of July. A relaxed afternoon, it has featured games, walks, picnics and refreshments. This year we are planning additional attractions for our nation's holiday.

Present plans include:

- Hearth Cooking presentation...no fireplace cooking, but displays of products and herbs and lecture by Leslie Evans, curator of the Avery-Copp Museum.
- Small animals...sheep, goats, miniature donkeys.
- Musket-firing demonstration.
- Nathan Lester reading the Declaration of Independence.
- Colonial era-inspired baked goods sale
- Hot dogs
- Bell Choir
- Tentatively, a loom demonstration and butter churning

Come to the Nathan Lester house on **July 4th**, at any time from **1:00** through **4:30 PM**, and bring the family. Hosting visitors at your house? Bring them along, too.

The **Nathan Lester House and Farm Tool Museum** is located at the intersection of **Long Cove and Vinegar Hill Roads** in **Gales Ferry**.

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MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

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Regatta Time in Gales Ferry

The weekend of our annual meeting also features the Harvard-Yale Regatta, the historic rowing race on the Thames River. The Gales Ferry District is hosting several events on the eve of the race, Saturday June 8th. These include a picnic at 5:00 PM, an illustrated lecture on Gales Ferry's history of the race by town historian Kit Foster at 6:00 PM, and demonstrations by the Noank and Leydard Rowing Clubs. In addition, author Daniella Garran will be signing copies of her book *A History of Collegiate Rowing in America* and coach Corrine Houle will be on hand to discuss adaptations for rowers who are visually or mobility impaired. If you plan on attending, please RSVP Marge Anderson at the i5 Teaching network: email marge@i5teachingnetwork.com.

The Freshman, Junior Varsity and Varsity races take place on the river on Sunday, June 9th.

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, June 8, 2013: Harvard-Yale Regatta lecture by Town Historian Kit Foster, Gales Ferry Community Center, 6:00 PM.

Sunday, June 9, 2013: Annual meeting, "The War of 1913," Ledyard Senior Center, 2:00 PM.

Saturday, June 22, 2013: Decatur Walk, Gales Ferry. See insert in this issue for details.

Wednesday, July 10, 2013: Executive Board meeting, Gales Ferry Community Center, 7:00 PM.

New Dues Structure to be Voted

It has been a decade since Ledyard Historical Society has revised its dues structure. After considering the cost to serve members, maintain our archives and carry out our history programs, the Executive Board endorsed the following new schedule, to be considered at the annual meeting. If enacted, the new dues will go into effect on the first of July.

Category	Present	Proposed
Individual	\$10.00	\$15.00
Family	15.00	20.00
Patron	25.00	50.00
Senior	5.00	10.00
Senior couple	8.00	
Student	(new)	5.00
Life	150.00	250.00
Life couple	200.00	

(Ledyard is the only historical society in the region offering couples memberships. The board proposes eliminating these.)

Highlights from the Executive Board Meeting, Mar. 13, 2013

The Board met at the Gales Ferry Community Center at 7:00 PM. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Vin Godino, Secretary Lee Moore, and committee chairs John Bolduc, Rusty Godino and Ellen Fossum.

- A letter was received from Jan Bell resigning from long-time office of Historian and Chair of the Research Room that bears her name. Her resignation was accepted with much regret, our appreciation to be sincerely expressed to her at a future event.

- The annual meeting in June will have a program on “The War of 1813 – Commodore Decatur Comes to Gales Ferry.” Connecticut’s first Official Troubador, Tom Callinan, will perform part of his original ballad of the War of 1812.
- Scholarship applications are being received from eligible Ledyard High School Seniors, to be evaluated after the April 23rd closing date.
- It was the Board’s consensus to pursue a more formal agreement with the owner on the land on which our Second District Schoolhouse is located.
- A nominating committee comprising Vin Godino, Rusty Godino and John Bolduc was appointed.
- Rusty Godino will arrange a Quakertown display for Ledyard Fair in September.

The above report has been condensed by the editor from the official minutes taken by Secretary Lee Moore.

REMEMBER, the Nathan Lester House is available for use by small groups of up to 35 people. Contact caretakers Lee Moore and Dan Weaver at 860-464-2040, or email nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com for more information or for tours out of season.



The Niles Mansion, where Stephen Decatur lived during the winter of 1813.

Ledyard Historical Society Nominating Committee 2013

The Society's 2013 Nominating Committee, has presented the following slate of officers committee chairs and Executive Board Members-at-Large. Officers serve two-year terms. All others serve for one-year terms.

President, Vice President and Secretary completing two-year terms.

Treasurer, filling vacancy for one-year term:
Neal Ganz

Committee Chairs

Membership: John Bolduc
 Programs: Ellen Fossum
 Education: Opportunity
 Publications: Dan Ryan
 Newsletter: Kit Foster
 Publicity: Publicity Team
 Curator: Bill Fossum
 Second District Schoolhouse: Bill Fossum
 Hospitality: Opportunity
 Information Tech. and Archives: Andrea Buka

Executive Board Members-at-Large

Gail Milroy
Rusty Godino

Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting, June 9th.



The Harvard Crew of 1883 poses before the race.

Proposed Society Budget for 2013-2014

Our Society by-laws call for the membership to adopt a budget at the annual meeting. The following proposal for the year 2013-2014 has been accepted by the Executive Board, and will be presented for discussion, amendment and action at the meeting.

Current year figures are shown for comparison, and it should be noted that since our fiscal year does not end until June 30th, the year-end totals are projections.

There will be an opportunity to pose questions, entertain discussion and offer amendments prior to the vote.

Receipts	Budget 2012-2013	Actual to 5-8-13	Expected to 6-30-13	Proposed 2013-2014
Book sales	\$1,000.00	\$1,407.35	\$1,407.35	\$1,000.00
Membership dues	\$800.00	\$620.00	\$620.00	\$800.00
Fund raising	\$1,000.00			\$1,000.00
Contributions	\$150.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$150.00
Misc sales	\$100.00	\$38.75	\$38.75	\$100.00
Royalties	\$25.00	\$34.91	\$34.91	\$25.00
Interest received	\$15.00	\$7.44	\$7.44	\$15.00
Total operating receipts	\$3,090.00	\$2,188.45	\$2,188.45	\$3,090.00
Expenditures				
Publications				
Fund Raising	\$50.00			\$100.00
Programs	\$500.00	\$150.00	\$250.00	\$500.00
Sales tax	\$40.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$40.00
Insurance	\$425.00		\$425.00	\$425.00
Dues & fees	\$275.00	\$135.00	\$135.00	\$275.00
Research room	\$100.00	\$77.26	\$77.26	\$100.00
Cataloging	\$2,000.00	\$970.00	\$1,270.00	\$2,000.00
Computer equip/IT	\$500.00			\$500.00
Newsletter	\$1,100.00			\$550.00
Schoolhouse	\$200.00			\$200.00
Awards (Ledyard HS)	\$50.00		\$50.00	\$50.00
Scholarship	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Contributions				
Curatorial Supplies	\$200.00			\$100.00
Map restoration				
Shelving				
Miscellaneous	\$150.00	\$57.90	\$120.00	\$150.00
Total op. exp.	\$6,590.00	\$1,480.16	\$3,417.26	\$4,990.00
Net Gain/(Loss)	(\$3,500.00)	\$708.29	(\$1,228.81)	(\$1,900.00)

**History in Small Helpings
With the College Crews – Sunday a Day
of Rest**

The college crews on the Thames took a day’s rest yesterday. Years ago it was the practice to take a light row after sunset on Sunday, but this year, as in the past few years, the Sabbath will be observed in resting from crew work.

It was nearly sunset before the crews went out on the river Saturday afternoon. Both Yale crews remained in the vicinity of Gales Ferry and did only light practice. The Harvard crews continued their hard work. Coach Lehmann had left for Worcester, where he spent Saturday, but the crew went out.

Captain Perkins took the crew to the Thames River drawbridge and sent them up over the four-mile course. Near the navy yard the four-oared crew, made up of substitutes, joined in and at the two and one-half mile mark the freshman crew got in the race. The freshman got a lead of two lengths and held it until a half mile from the finish, when the ‘varsity cut the lead down to one length. At the end of the four miles the freshmen led by hardly one length. If there had been another half mile to go the ‘varsity would have passed the youngsters, notwithstanding they had rowed four miles.

The Day, June 13, 1898

In those days, the happenings on the river were keenly reported in the local press – Editor.

Pay your dues, recruit a member?

Our membership year runs nominally from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. **Dues for 2012-2013 are now due and payable.** If your dues are paid through 2013 (check your mailing label), please use this form to recruit a new member.

**Ledyard Historical Society
Membership Year 2013-2014
Act now to join or renew at these prices!**

Name _____	_____ Senior \$5.00
Address _____	_____ Senior Couple \$8.00
_____	_____ Individual \$10.00
Telephone _____	_____ Family \$15.00
E-mail address _____	_____ Patron \$25.00
Special interests or comments _____	_____ Life \$150.00
_____	_____ Life Couple \$200.00

Mail to: Ledyard Historical Society
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THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Box 411
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Who's Who at Ledyard Historical Society 2012-2013

President: Kit Foster	464-6466	Second District Schoolhouse:	
Vice President:		Bill Fossum	464-2575
Vin Godino	464-6314	Hospitality:	
Secretary: Lee Moore	464-2040	Information Technology:	
Treasurer: Vacancy		Andrea Buka	235-2387
Programs: Ellen Fossum	464-2575	Publications: Rusty Godino	464-6314
Membership: John Bolduc	464-0366	Board Member-at-Large	
Newsletter: Kit Foster	464-6466	Gail Milroy	
Publicity: Vacancy			
Curator: Bill Fossum	464-2575		

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