



# The Acorn

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NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Volume IX Number I

[www.ledyardhistory.org](http://www.ledyardhistory.org)

October 2012

## October Meeting to Highlight Local and Genealogical Research Kate Dimancescu to speak on *The Forgotten Chapters*

On **Sunday, October 14, 2012**, Ledyard Historical Society member and author **Kate Dimancescu** will speak about her forthcoming book, *The Forgotten Chapters: My Journey into the Past*. She will share highlights of her genealogical research, much of which was done at the Ledyard Historical Society's Janice Bell Research Room. She will talk about how the archives there helped inspire her book by revealing new information about her ancestry. The archives opened doors for Kate into a long and rich family history in Ledyard, which stretched back to the 1600s, through ancestors bearing last names such as Williams, Stanton, and Morgan. It was through publications printed by the Society that she was able to learn about her ancestors who called Ledyard home for centuries. She was also able to visit the Williams family cemetery on Town Farm Road for the first time in 2000. She has been excited to document, view, and identify the graves of ancestors, who fought in the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

During her presentation, Kate will also talk about how she rediscovered her family roots in Ledyard through connections with distant cousins, records of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Connecticut Historical Society and other researchers.

Other highlights of Kate's talk will cover insights into her Quaker ancestry, which includes Mary Dyer, who was jailed and later executed in Boston because she was a Quaker. During her research, Kate discovered her Ledyard family relations included Mrs. Anna Matilda (Appelman) Larrabee, who was born in Ledyard in the 1840s and later married a future governor of Iowa, William Larrabee, also born and raised in Ledyard, Connecticut.

Kate recently made a presentation at Montauk, the former home of Anna Matilda and William Larrabee in Clermont, Iowa. The attendees of her presentation were excited to hear Kate speak about Ledyard, Connecticut connections. She hopes the audience on October 14<sup>th</sup> will be excited in turn to hear about Clermont, Iowa connections forged in the 19th Century.

Following Kate's presentation, the Research Room will be open so that attendees may become more familiar with our holdings and our research capabilities. As cataloging progresses, more and more material is being indexed on line, available through the LiON (Libraries ON line) system.

The meeting will be held in the **Bill Library Meeting Room in Ledyard Center**, beginning at **2:00 PM**. The Bill Library is located at **718 Colonel Ledyard Highway**. The meeting is open to the public, so please come and bring a friend.

## **Geer Hill School Open House Way Station also to host visitors**

October is proving to be a busy month. On **Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>**, the **Geer Hill School** Association, owners and caretakers of the preserved one-room schoolhouse on **Colonel Ledyard Highway**, will open the building to visitors. Although open by appointment to groups and researchers, the schoolhouse does not have regular visiting hours, so this will be a rare opportunity to drop in unannounced. Hours for the open house will be **2:00 to 4:00 PM**.

Ledyard is fortunate to have nine of its 14 former one-room schools surviving, three in their original and preserved state. This is believed to be unique in the state. During the same hours, the old Way Station, sometimes called the Bill Store or Tavern, at the corner of Church Hill and Spicer Hill Roads will also be open. This intersection was once known as The Crossroads, and was the population and business center of the Second Ecclesiastical Society, prior to the creation of the Town of Ledyard in 1836. Ledyard Center as we know it today did not develop until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Built circa 1819, the Way Station stood at the intersection of what were then major highways, and as such it was a natural place for coaches to take on and discharge passengers. The store, or way station, stands opposite the Bill Parsonage, once home to the prominent Bill family.

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## *The Acorn*

MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

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Published bimonthly by Ledyard Historical Society, Inc.,  
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Items for inclusion should be submitted by the first of  
July, September, November, January, March or May.  
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## **Thank you, Andrea and Scott**

It is with some sorrow and many thanks that we bid farewell this autumn to Andrea and Scott Buka, as they conclude nine years as curators and caretakers at the Nathan Lester House and Farm Tool Museum. Changing careers dictate that they can no longer maintain the rigorous hours required during the summer open season. Fortunately, they plan to live nearby, and to continue in Society activities at a somewhat reduced level. We have been blessed with their presence and enthusiasm since they moved to Ledyard, and their experience and energy has been responsible for such good things as the Ledyard Sampler and the expansion of the Society's information technology efforts. The latter includes our website, [ledyardhistory.org](http://ledyardhistory.org) and ongoing efforts in cataloging our archives on line.

We wish Scott and Andrea well in their new endeavors and look forward to working with them in lesser roles, as time permits them to continue with our Society activities.

The Lester House caretakers lease from the Historic District Commission, which administers the property for the Town of Ledyard. As we go to press, a lease with new tenant-caretakers is before the Town Council for approval. We look forward to introducing them to you in the next issue of *The Acorn*. In the mean time, the best way to make inquiries concerning the Nathan Lester House is to email [nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com), or [events@ledyardhistory.org](mailto:events@ledyardhistory.org), or call House Committee chair Vin Godino at 860-464-6314.

## **Local Histories Expo III Groton – October 20<sup>th</sup>**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will be hosting their third Local Histories Expo this year on **Saturday, October 20, 2012**. In a format similar to two previous events, some 30 local and Connecticut historical societies, facilities and organizations will have artifacts on display and books for sale. Staff will be on hand to answer questions and engage in collegial networking. The late Carol Kimball, Groton's indefatigable historian, described the first Expo as "a real carnival atmosphere. Everyone had great fun." This year's event promises the same enthusiasm and camaraderie.

The Ledyard Historical Society will be an exhibitor, highlighting the research capabilities in our Janice Bell Research Room and Ledyard's historical sites and features.

The event will take place from **11:00 AM to 4:00 PM** at the church, **1230 Flanders Road in Groton** (Mystic). It is free and open to the public.

### **Are you a public person?**

...as in publicity. We have a vacancy for the Publicity chair, the person charged with publicizing Society events and getting our name out to the public. Programs chair Ellen Fossum has been taking care of this on an ad hoc basis, but the job properly demands more attention than she is able to give it.

Duties include funneling information on events to the local newspapers, cable companies and community billboards. If you can help with this, contact Ellen at 860-464-2575, [bothamlyfossum@aol.com](mailto:bothamlyfossum@aol.com), or Kit Foster, 860-464-6466 or [president@ledyardhistory.org](mailto:president@ledyardhistory.org).

## **Can You Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide?**

Unforeseen circumstances recently forced our treasurer to resign. President Kit Foster is currently handling financial matters on an ad-hoc basis, but the continued viability of the Society requires more attention than another officer can give to the task. Experience with bookkeeping is certainly desirable, but by no means mandatory. Our transactions are few, and as the headline suggests, our records are quite simple. Familiarity with such software tools like spread sheets and elementary financial programs like Quicken or Quickbooks is obviously a plus.

If you have the interest and the ability to devote a few hours a month to this important job, please contact Kit at 860-464-6466 or [president@ledyardhistory.org](mailto:president@ledyardhistory.org). Your Society will be very grateful.

## **Historic Cemetery Walk Gales Ferry, Saturday, November 3**

Town Historian Kit Foster will lead an interpreted walk through the Gales Ferry Cemetery on **Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>**. The vent will benefit the Gales Ferry Cemetery Association.

Established in 1834 on a half acre at the east end of the village purchased from Ralph Hurlbutt, the Cemetery became an organized association in 1886. It is the resting place of many generations of the founding families in the town. The walk will cover the histories of these families as they relate to development of the village.

Meet at **1:00 PM** at the **Gales Ferry Community Center, 18 Hurlbutt Road**, between the Cemetery and the Gales Ferry Library. A donation of \$5.00 per person is suggested to help the Cemetery Association to maintain and care for this historic burying ground.

## Mark Your Calendar

**Sunday, Oct 14, 2012:** Membership Meeting, Kate Dimancescu on *The Forgotten Chapters*, **Bill Library, 2:00 PM.**

**Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012:** Executive Board, **7:00 PM**, location to be announced.

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 2012:** Yule Celebration, **Nathan Lester House, 1:00 to 4:30 PM.**

## Highlights from Recent Society Meetings

### Executive Board, May 8, 2012

The Board met at the Bill Library on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Present were: President Kit Foster, Vice President Ellen Fossum, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Nancy Avery, Committee Chairs Rusty Godino and Jan Bell and Member-at-Large Vin Godino. Mayor John Rodolico was a guest.

Before the business of the society was discussed, Kit welcomed the Mayor discussed ways to honor and celebrate the town's role in events of the War of 1812. Preliminary discussions have taken place with Dow Chemical regarding access to the monument on Mt. Decatur.

- The annual meeting will commence with a pot luck supper at the Ledyard Senior Center on June 12. Louisa Watrous will give a short demo of her work cataloging the Society's archives and information that may be accessed on line.
- The Scholarship Committee has received eight applications, and will review them shortly.

- The Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers to be voted on at the June 12 Annual Meeting.
- A Budget totaling \$6900.00 in expenditures was adopted, for presentation to the members at the Annual Meeting.
- It was decided to omit membership meetings in August and December.

### Annual Membership Meeting, June 12, 2012.

The annual membership meeting convened at the Ledyard Senior Center. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Ellen Fossum, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Nancy Avery, Publications Chair Rusty Godino, Historian Jan Bell, Member-at-Large Vin Godino and approximately 10 other members and non-member guests.

- There will not be an August meeting or program, but we may collaborate with *The Friends of the Library* on future programs.
- **Publications:** Rusty mentioned *Quakertown*, the book on the Rogerene village, is available now for \$20 at both libraries and through the website, and even at tonight's meeting!
- **Librarian:** Jan Bell shared several requests she's received for information, including one from Australia. A woman researching her genealogy was seeking information on George & Janice Bell!
- **Curator:** Ellen reported a recent donation of a lovely hooked rug, which may be used in the Lester House.

- **Nominations:** Kit presented the slate of candidates for officers and committee chairpersons as:

President-Kit Foster  
 Vice President-Vin Godino  
 Secretary-Lee Moore  
 Treasurer-Debbie Vessels  
 Membership-John Bolduc  
 Librarian-Jan Bell  
 Programs-Ellen Fossum  
 Newsletter-Kit Foster  
 Curator-Bill Fossum  
 Schoolhouse-Bill Fossum  
 Publications-Rusty Godino  
 IT-Andrea Buka

- Election of Officers - Election of the above slate was voted unanimously.
- The members adopted a 2012-2013 Budget, presented page 6 of this issue.
- Kit reported the annual Book Award was made to Kayla Fowler, and our Scholarship recipient was Adam Butters.
- Kit asked for comments regarding the past year's meetings and programs, and suggestions for any changes to schedules, times, etc.

### **Executive Board, June 26, 2012**

The Board met at the Bill Library. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Vin Godino, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Debbie Vessels, Retiring Treasurer Nancy Avery, Publications Chair Rusty Godino, Membership Chair John Bolduc, Historian Jan Bell and Members-at-Large Gail Milroy and Andrea Buka.

- Outgoing treasurer Nancy Avery reported year-end balances as Checking: \$407.91 and Savings: \$12,707.27. Total assets of \$13,115.18 represent a net loss of \$5,048.99 for the fiscal year.
- Member Kate Dimancescu has been invited to speak at the October meeting about researching her forthcoming book about her Ledyard ancestors.
- The Old Fashioned Fourth celebration was scheduled (note: it was later canceled due to threatening weather).
- Jan Bell reported that we have been given a box full of photographs. Carol Ganz will review them before accession.
- Louisa Watrous and the IT Committee have continued cataloging and scanning our archives. She has suggested there may be grants available to help with this effort.
- Rusty Godino reported that the new book, *Quakertown*, is selling well. It is available at both town libraries.
- The board decided to move Executive meetings to the second Wednesday of alternate months: September, November, January, March and May.
- Membership meetings may be scheduled on days to accommodate speakers' schedules, in the months of October, December, February, April and June.

*The above reports have been condensed by the editor from the official minutes taken by Secretary Lee Moore.*

## Society Budget for 2012-2013

<b>Receipts</b>	Budget 2011-2012	Actual 2011-2012	Proposed 2012-2013
Book sales	\$1,000.00	\$1,769.00	\$1,000.00
Membership dues	\$900.00	\$794.00	\$900.00
Fund raising	\$1,000.00	\$606.00	\$1,000.00
Contributions	\$150.00	\$281.05	\$150.00
Misc sales	\$250.00	\$27.25	\$250.00
Royalties	\$25.00	\$32.94	\$25.00
Interest received	\$20.00	\$15.46	\$20.00
Total operating receipts	\$3,345.00	\$3,525.70	\$3,345.00
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Publication projects		\$4,500.00	
Fund Raising	\$100.00	\$41.00	\$100.00
Programs	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Sales tax	\$75.00	\$28.00	\$75.00
Insurance	\$425.00	\$425.00	\$425.00
Dues & fees	\$250.00	\$409.00	\$250.00
Research room	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Cataloging	\$2,100.00	\$2,140.00	\$2,100.00
Computer equip/IT	\$500.00	\$18.34	\$500.00
Newsletter	\$1,100.00	\$0.00	\$1,100.00
Schoolhouse	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Awards (Ledyard HS)	\$50.00	\$13.35	\$50.00
Scholarship	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Contributions			
Curatorial Supplies	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Map restoration			
Shelving			
Miscellaneous	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Total operating exp.	\$6,900.00	\$8,574.69	\$6,900.00
Net Gain/(Loss	(\$3,555.00)	(\$5,048.99)	(\$3,555.00)
End of Period Assets			
Checking Acct		\$407.91	
Savings		\$12,707.27	
CDs			
Total Assets		\$13,115.18	

## Could You Adopt a Cemetery?

The Ledyard Cemetery Committee is seeking volunteers or organizations to help maintain some of the town's 25 historic abandoned cemeteries. Currently there are three cemeteries which are up for "adoption." Please contact Vin Godino at 860-464-6314 or e-mail sgodino@snet.net.

## History in Small Helpings

### Gales Ferry – Local Miscellany

Miss Mabel Smith, Tracey Smith, Harlan Newbury and R. Irving Hurlbutt, members of the Ledyard grange, were entertained by the Groton grange at A.O.U.W. hall Friday evening.

Several flocks of wild geese were heard passing over the village last week, three being sighted on Saturday.

The village school, taught by Miss Grace A. Chapman of Allyns Point,

reopened for the spring term Monday morning.

Lieutenant Charles Satterlee, commander of the U.S.S. Acushnet, returned Saturday from Michigan after spending his shore leave at Sault Ste. Marie, where he was at one time stationed.

Mrs. Irvin Haley of Brooklyn, N.Y. is visiting her daughter, Mrs. Billings F.S. Crandall at Channel Side Farm.

*The Day, Apr. 14, 1915*

*Lt. (later Capt.) Satterlee was lost at sea with the tragic sinking of the Coast Guard Cutter "U.S.S. Tampa" in 1918. A monument to his memory is located in the Gales Ferry Cemetery. The "village school" mentioned is the Society's historic building opposite the new CVS pharmacy. The Crandalls' home at Channel Side Farm is now the headquarters of United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, at the corner of Routes 12 and 214.*

*-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 2012-2013

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  
P.O. Box 411  
Ledyard, CT 06339-0411



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	572-7084	Information Technology:	
Treasurer: Vacancy		Andrea Buka	235-2387
Programs: Ellen Fossum	464-2575	Publications: Rusty Godino	464-6314
Membership: John Bolduc	464-6466	<b>Board Member-at-Large</b>	
Historian: Jan Bell	464-2061	Gail Milroy	
Newsletter: Kit Foster	464-6466		
Publicity: Vacancy			
Curator: Bill Fossum	464-2575		

*All area codes 860*