



# The Acorn

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NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

April 2015

## **They Called Me “Lizzy” Stephanie Jackson’s Portrayal of Mrs. Lincoln’s Dressmaker & Confidante Rescheduled to March 29<sup>th</sup>**

Our winter meeting, which was canceled for a number of reasons, has been rescheduled from February to March 29<sup>th</sup>. It will celebrate both women’s history and African-American history, as actress Stephanie Jackson brings her dramatic presentation “**They Called Me Lizzy...from Slavery to the White House**” to Ledyard.

Jackson’s one-woman show portrays Elizabeth Hobbs Keckly, best known as dressmaker and confidante to Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of President Abraham Lincoln, and covers Keckly’s rise from slavery to entrepreneurial freedom.

“They Called Me Lizzy” is produced under the auspices of the East Haddam Stage Company, Kandie Carle, director.

The Ledyard Senior Center joins the Ledyard Library Friends and the Society as sponsor for this event. This joint program will constitute the Society’s late winter meeting, held on **Sunday afternoon, March 29, 2015, at the Ledyard Senior Center, 12 Van Tassel Drive** in Gales Ferry, beginning at **2:00 PM**. The event is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be served. Be sure to come and bring a friend.

## **Play Ball! Baseball Then (1860s) and Now at April Meeting**

Ledyard resident Mike Dreimiller and Jim Wyman of Ashford will speak to the Society at our spring membership meeting on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. They will discuss baseball as it was played during the 1860s, a time when the game grew rapidly and spread throughout America, as well as contemporary vintage baseball in which competitors re-enact the early game observing the rules and customs of 150 years ago.

In 1860, no one wore a glove and pitchers threw underhand. On the other hand, nine fielders played all the familiar positions, there were three outs per inning and nine innings per game, as today.

Both Mike and Jim play for the Thames River Nine, a vintage baseball club sponsored by the New London County Historical Society. They are also members of the Society of American Baseball Research, a national to worldwide organization dedicated to facilitating all facets of baseball research.

The meeting will take place on **Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**, at the **Bill Library Meeting Room** in Ledyard, beginning at **2:00 PM**. The Bill Library is located at **718 Colonel Ledyard Highway** in Ledyard.

## Mark Your Calendar

**Sunday, March 29, 2015:** Membership Meeting, Ledyard Senior Center, 2:00 PM. Stephanie Jackson presents “They Called Me Lizzy.”

**First Saturday mornings, April 4, May 2 and June 6, 2015:** Catch and Release photo scanning sessions, Janice W. Bell Research Room, Bill Library, 9:30 AM to noon.

**Sunday, April 19, 2015:** Membership meeting, Bill Library meeting room, 2:00 PM. Mike Dreimiller and Jim Wyman speak on Baseball: 1860 and Now.

**Wednesday, May 13, 2015:** Executive Board meeting, Gales Ferry Community Center, 7:00 PM.

**Sunday, June 14, 2015:** Annual meeting, Fellowship Hall, Ledyard Congregational Church, 3:00 PM. Susan Bailey speaks on Georgiana Fulton, followed by a pot luck supper.

**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](mailto:nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com) for more information or for tours out of season.

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## *The Acorn*

mighty oaks from little acorns grow

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## The Life and Times of Georgiana Fulton

### Susan Bailey to Speak on Local Artist at Annual Meeting

Georgiana Fulton came to Mystic from New York City during World War I. She settled on Mason’s Island, where she lived in a ramshackle cottage that had been converted from a chicken coop. An artist and independent thinker, she taught in the one-room schoolhouse on the island, the last teacher before it closed in 1927. She studied under John Henry Twachtman in New York, then sailed for Europe in 1900. She studied impressionism in Paris until the outbreak of war, when she returned home.

Susan McGee Bailey, a retired professor from Wellesley Collge, befriended Miss Fulton after her own arrival on Mason’s Island as young girl in 1948. Over the next ten years, and intermittently afterwards, she shared many moments with the eccentric artist, and since Fulton’s death has continued research into the life and times of this enigmatic woman. She will share some of those stories with us at our annual meeting on **Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>**.

The program will follow a brief business meeting. Afterwards, members and guests till enjoy a pot luck supper. The meeting begins at **3:00 PM** at the **Cy Anderson Fellowship Hall** at **Ledyard Congregational Church**.

## Nominations are Open

Our annual meeting in June will elect the chairs of standing committees and Executive Board members-at-large for the coming year (officers serve two-year terms, next elected in 2016). If you are interested in serving your Society, contact nominating committee folks Vin Godino, Andrea Buka or Neal Ganz.

## **Highlights from the Executive Board Meeting January 14, 2015**

The Executive Board of the Ledyard Historical Society convened at the Gales Ferry Community Center on January 14th, 2015. President Kit Foster called the meeting into non-executive session at 7:10 PM.

There was no quorum, so official business could not be conducted.

Correspondence: A thank you note was received from Mr. & Mrs. Main of Montana for the Ledyard and Gales Ferry "Images" book, who were glad to have joined the hike in October; bringing up memories of their old property.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Neal Ganz reported via email that account balances are \$2,282.58 for our checking account, and \$10,659.68 in the savings account. Expenses to date totaled \$398.24 and receipts were \$1,098.95.

### **Committee Reports:**

Membership: John Bolduc reported we picked up one new member & had nine renewals since our last meeting. There are currently 66 paid and 16 unpaid members, and 15 complimentary newsletters that are distributed.

### **Programs:**

Lee reported on the success of the Yuletide Celebration, noting, however, the food inventory was sorely lacking. We should plan a small budget to have various trays of food prepared ahead of time, instead of depending on guests to bring food items.

Lee said he'll be planning July 4th committee meetings soon for the Old Fashioned Fourth in July.

The question of a speaker for the annual meeting in June came up, and consensus was in the affirmative. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 14th. Lee will look into securing the Congregational Church Fellowship Hall for the meeting.

### **Artifact Committee:**

Vin Godino presented a report from Rusty. Second District Schoolhouse:

Vin is looking into finding legal counsel regarding the question of ownership, and some discussion centered on removing some of the items inside, with particular concern for the Schoolmaster's desk.

Photographing the interior of the Lester House will start on January 21st.

Should accession/de-accession regulations be published in the newsletter? It was decided it would be best to have it on the website.

What items are on loan? Kit will follow-up with Rusty for a listing.

Publications: Some recent sales, per Dan. John suggested a discounted price for a complete set.

### **Old Business:**

A 19<sup>th</sup> Century cruet set, donated by Martha Minich, has been received.

### **New Business:**

Rusty proposed a yard sale at the Lester House for the spring. Various thoughts, but tabled for future discussion.

Nominations for Committee Chairs: will be on the agenda for the next meeting March 11th.

*Condensed by the editor from the approved notes by Secretary Lee Moore.*

## **Archives R Us**

### **Recent Doings at the Janice W. Bell Historical Research Room**

The Archive Committee has met less often over the last few months, due to the holidays, unusual amounts of snow, and personal schedules. Several work sessions have occurred, and progress is being made on the archive inventory.

A change in the regular dates for the monthly Archive Committee meeting has occurred. We now meet the first Saturday of the month, where we hold a “Catch & Release” session from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM. We have held three of these events, on January 10<sup>th</sup>, February 7<sup>th</sup>, and March 7<sup>th</sup> of this year. Among the visitors were Janet Barnett, Anne Roberts-Pearson, and Ed Lamb, all of whom contributed materials to the archive.

We are assisting Ed by scanning photos taken during the recent renovations at the Lamb Homestead and helping him to assemble them into a Power Point presentation to aid in his talk at the Bill Library in September. He will be presenting for the Historical Society at a later date, as well. The digital copies of these photos will become part of the Janice W. Bell Historical Research Room archive, and will be in our Digital Collection on the website.

We have handled a handful of research questions since my last report, and are currently helping several people in their endeavors to find their ancestors, as well as fielding a couple of “what all do you have in the archive?” questions. One item arrived in our inbox in an interesting way. It came from a woman in New Jersey, who is seeking documentation on her Bill ancestors. She mailed a written letter to the former address of the late Signe Post, a past Society

president. This letter made its way, in true small-town style, to a neighbor of that house, and then down the roads to Kit Foster, who scanned and emailed it to us at the research email address. (We hope to find the information she needs to complete her application to the D.A.R. in our archive.) Our thanks to Kit for the capture, and also to Kate Dimancescu, for recalling some of the resources she used in her work that are in common with this inquiry.

Since my last report I have successfully assembled the digital collection project for my college class, and have it ready whenever it is needed. It is suitable for presentation to a group, as well as (after a couple of tweaks) a user-driven computer display in other venues. Places such as the Nathan Lester House, the Ledyard Fair, and the like come to mind. In the future, it could be made available on our website as a way to highlight some of our archive documents, while providing them some context.

Our next large project will be the production of the Society’s first e-book. Rusty Godino has agreed to update her very popular *Historic Cemetery Inscriptions*, and we are getting ready to begin work on the second edition of this book. This publication will have a two-fold benefit: it will make the book available in a digital format, while generating some much-needed revenue.

Our Facebook page currently has 111 members, and the Town Historian and Society President, Kit Foster, has responded to several posts page concerning town history at the Ledyard and Gales Ferry Community Forum on Facebook.

*Andrea Buka*  
*Archive Committee Chair*

**The Blizzard of '78  
Recollections from the Homefront**

The account of the Blizzard of 1978 in the February *Acorn* was incomplete. E.B. closed, the Sub Base closed, Pfizer closed. Before you came home, I dug out the driveway. Alayne next door and Carlene on the corner did theirs; it was a symphony of shoveling for our spouses' return.

Then it drifted back in. I dug it out again. It drifted back in. I could not keep up with the snow and wind. If you hadn't stopped for groceries you might have snuck in between drifts, but then we would not have had food for the three days. Nicholas [our eldest and, at the time, only child] stood at the kitchen door and banged on the glass while I dug out. He added "snow" to "car," "dada" and "truck" in his vocabulary. I bought my first and only pair of snow pants, still getting lots of use. Thanks, Monkey Ward!

*Jill Foster  
Gales Ferry*

*If you don't remember Monkey Ward this will help:*  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montgomery\\_Ward](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montgomery_Ward)



*Winter of old: Looking north from the "new" Route 12 during World War II, with Mount Decatur in the background.*

**Pay your dues, recruit a member?**

Our membership year runs nominally from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. **Dues for 2014-2015 are now due and payable.** If your dues are paid through 2015 (check your mailing label), please use this form to recruit a new member.

**Ledyard Historical Society  
Membership Year 2014-2015**

Name _____	_____ Student \$5.00
Address _____	_____ Senior \$10.00
Town State Zip _____	_____ Senior Couple \$15.00
_____	_____ Individual \$15.00
Telephone _____	_____ Family \$20.00
E-mail address _____	_____ Patron \$50.00
Special interests or comments _____	_____ Life \$250.00

Mail to: Ledyard Historical Society  
P.O. Box 411  
Ledyard, CT 06339-0411

Check here to receive our newsletter by e-mail.



THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Box 411  
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

## Who's Who at Ledyard Historical Society 2014-2015

President: Kit Foster	464-6466	Artifacts: Rusty Godino	464-6314
Vice President: Vin Godino	464-6314	Archives: Andrea Buka	235-2387
Secretary: Lee Moore	464-2040	Publications: Dan Ryan	464-6723
Treasurer: Neal Ganz	464-9441		
Membership: John Bolduc	464-0366	<b>Board Member-at-Large</b>	
Newsletter: Kit Foster	464-6466	Scott Buka	
		All area codes 860	