



# The Acorn

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NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## When Johnny Came Marching Home Ledyard Volunteers in the Civil War



More than 100 Ledyard residents served in the Union military services during the War Between the States. Twenty-nine of them did not march home, their lives given on the battlefield. Their names are inscribed on the obelisk outside the Bill Library, a monument given by Ledyard Bill and dedicated on July 4, 1872, predating the library itself by a full two decades.

At our **Autumn meeting**, on **October 25<sup>th</sup>**, Scott Buka will speak about those men, both casualties and survivors. Notable among them are the members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Regiment, Volunteer Infantry, at the Siege of Port Hudson, May 25<sup>th</sup> to July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1863, in Louisiana. It was the final and successful engagement in the Union campaign to liberate the Mississippi River. Second Lieutenant Stanton Allyn, youngest child of Roswell Allyn of Ledyard's "Crossroads" (Spicer Hill and Church Hill Roads), is remembered for his bravery and gallantry as the only soldier to breach the parapet of Confederate fortifications. He died in the Battle of Brashear City, Louisiana, on August 23, 1863, and is buried in the Ledyard Center Cemetery.

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

## TIME TO PAY DUES

Our 2015-16 membership year has begun. If you have not yet paid your dues (check your mailing label), please use the form on page 5 to renew. Your membership helps us to bring you more history, more often!

## Mark Your Calendar

**Sunday, Oct. 25, 2015:** Membership Meeting, 2:00 PM, Bill Library Meeting Room: Scott Buka speaks on Ledyard's soldiers in the Civil War.

**Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2015:** Executive Board, 5:00 PM, Nathan Lester House.

**Sunday, Dec. 6, 2015,** Yule Celebration, Nathan Lester House, 1:00 to 4:30 PM.

**Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2016:** Executive Board, time and place to be announced.

**Sunday, Feb. 21, 2016,** Joint Meeting with Ledyard Library Friends, Bill Library Meeting Room, 2:00 PM. Nancy Steenberg speaks on freed slave Venture Smith. **Snow date, Feb. 28.**

**Wednesday, Mar. 9, 2016,** Executive Board, time and place to be announced.

**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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## Sleigh bells ring, are ya listenin'? Celebrate the Season at the Nathan Lester House, Dec. 6

The Society's annual **Yule Social** will be held at the **Nathan Lester House** on **Sunday afternoon, December 6**, from **1:00 to 4:00 PM**. The house will be festive with holiday decorations, open for tours and refreshment will be provided for all. Bring a friend, and some snacks to share.

## Venture Smith: Slave to Freedman Dr. Nancy Steenberg to speak at February 21<sup>st</sup> Joint Meeting.

Our February meeting, jointly sponsored by the Ledyard Library Friends, will feature local professor and author Nancy Hathaway Steenberg speaking on Venture Smith. Born Broteer Furro in West Africa, he was taken as a slave to Rhode Island and later indentured on Fishers Island and also in Stonington. He was able to purchase his freedom in 1765 and spent the rest of his life at Haddam Neck. In 1798, his account, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America. Related by Himself*, was published by C. Holt at The Bee-office in New London.

The meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 21, 2016**, and the **Bill Library Meeting Room**. A **snow date** of **February 28<sup>th</sup>** has been reserved.

## Did You Miss the Talking Walls?

Ed Lamb's program on the Lamb Homestead, "If Walls Could Talk," drew a packed house for the Library Friends last month. If you missed it, come to our annual meeting in June 2016, where Ed will present an updated version. Date and place will be announced.

## From the Archive Committee

The Archive Committee, consisting of Sheila (Rusty) Godino, Louisa Watrous, Scott Buka, and myself, is back in the swing of things after a lovely summer. Our recent “Catch & Release” session netted (pun intended) five visitors. They shared with us digital copies of pictures of the Old Town Hall renovation now going on, the loan for scanning of pictures taken around Ledyard used in a long-time elementary school project by a retired teacher, and a quick visit by a curious gentleman wanting to share some local and family history stories.

We are currently working on four research inquiries, and will be hosting a retired judge who is researching Silas Deane. In our preparations for his visit, we discovered in Google Books’ vast collection several important books that will come in handy when looking into local and state history. One of them is *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut [1636-1776]*, by Charles J. Hoadly, State Librarian. It was published in Hartford in 1890, and seems to be transcriptions of the actual records of political bodies of the time period. It is available here as a free ebook: <https://books.google.com/books> . I noticed it contained many familiar names and places, and even mentioned the ‘Pequod’ tribe. We do have a copy of it in the Bell Archive, but the ebook is much more convenient for most of us to access.

Recently, I had an idea to help the public better understand, and perhaps participate more in, the collection of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Gales Ferry and Ledyard history. It would be the promotion of the slogan “5 for the Archive”. People would be encouraged to take five pictures of an event, say the Fair or an anniversary party, and share digital copies with us, along with the pertinent information such as names, dates, site, etc.

They might also select five things (photos, memorabilia, documents, etc.) to share or donate that may be unrelated to each other, such as a class roster, a memorial service program, a Girl Scout project photo, a brochure from a defunct local business, and a town directory. These items would be scanned and returned, (or if donated outright, accessioned) and added to our collection. The public would be welcome to make an appointment or come to a “Catch & Release” session to share their treasures.

The collection of newer materials brings up the need to create a policy concerning personal privacy and identity protection. There may be those who would like to donate items, but may not wish to have them made public for many years or even decades. These may include such valuable records as diaries or military documents. I would like to have a discussion on this topic at a future Board or Membership Meeting. The aim, as I see it, is to protect personal privacy while still preserving our current history for future generations. Think how valuable the diaries from the Satterlee family have been to us now! Their worth will only increase in the future.

We look forward to our next “Catch and Release” session on Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, from 9:30 to 12:00 at the Bill Library.

*Andrea Buka, Archive Committee Chair*



*Teacher Grace Chapman rings in the 1908-09 school year at Stoddard District School 13 on Whalehead Road.*

## Highlights of recent meetings

### Executive Board May 13th, 2015

The Executive Board of the Ledyard Historical Society convened at the Nathan Lester House on May 13th, 2015. President Kit Foster called the meeting to order at 3:09 PM. In attendance were President Kit Foster, Vice-President Vin Godino, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Neal Ganz, Committee Chairs Rusty Godino and Andrea Buka.

**Correspondence:** Kit received an inquiry about haunted homes of Ledyard and Gales Ferry; he will recommend they call the paranormal society who had done the investigation at the Lester House.

**Treasurer's Report:** Neal submitted his report showing account balances of \$2,417.90 for our checking account, and \$10,661.43 in the savings account. The total Balance of Funds is \$13,079.43. Motion to accept the report subject to audit was made by Vin and approved by the Board.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Archives:** Andrea reviewed her report which is included in full following the minutes. She also asked for feedback regarding email accounts, and obtained an update from all present. We now have over 600 photographs on the website.

**Artifacts:** Steps to the Carpenter Shop have been repaired, and we've acquired the necessary archival tools to begin photographing our collection. Rusty has sent accession forms to a possible donor of old school bells. Discussions continue regarding the Second District Schoolhouse.

#### **Old Business:**

- Nothing to report on bequest of Stoddard spoon or cruet set.

#### **New Business:**

- Nominating Committee: Everyone present at the meeting agreed to stay in their respective positions. What we still need is a chair person for Programs, and

a few more Members-at-Large (4 max total). Andrea acknowledged the hard word of Louisa with our publicity; but if someone else could take it on it would be a tremendous help. Scott has agreed to stand for member-at-large; Lee mentioned Dan Weaver may be available also. Kit will add a notice in *The Acorn*.

- Budget for 2015-2016: Kit and Neal will create a proposed budget to be circulated by emails for discussion. This needs to be presented to the membership at the annual meeting for approval.
- Book Award, Ledyard High School: Andrea and Kit will select the book to be presented to a Junior in high school, June 2nd. Kit will make the presentation.

The meeting ended at 5:02pm.

### Annual Meeting June 14, 2015

The Membership of the Ledyard Historical Society convened at the Fellowship Hall of the Ledyard Congregational Church on Sunday June 14th, 2015. President Kit Foster called the meeting to order at 3:08 PM. In attendance were President Kit Foster, Vice President Vin Godino, Treasurer Neal Ganz, Committee Chairs John Bolduc, Rusty Godino, Andrea Buka, Member-at-Large Scott Buka and other members.

#### **Correspondence:**

Kit informed the guests of a gift received from a former Ledyard/Gales Ferry resident (1952-1962) Paul Schubert, a trustee of his local historical society of Bath Township, Ohio of the *Images of America* series featuring their town.

**Treasurer's Report:** Neal Ganz submitted a report as of June 14th, (actual fiscal year-end is the 30th) showing Total Assets/Net Worth of \$13,079.78. The Cash Flow for the same period reports Total Receipts of \$1,968.9 largely from book sales and membership dues, but including contributions and fund-raising. Expenditures totaled \$711.19 -a significant drop from last

year- primarily due to the donation of cataloging time performed by Louisa Watrous, with our heart-felt thanks. The bulk of the expenses includes costs for insurance, various programs and fund-raising efforts. This gave us a net gain of \$1,257.71 with account balances of \$10,661.88 in the savings account, and \$2,417.90 currently in the checking account.

### **Committee Reports:**

- Membership-John Bolduc reminded everyone that dues need to be paid now for the coming year. We have 69 active members, of which 12 are overdue in their payments, and giving a list of those unpaid active members. We have 82 Inactive Members still on the roles, and 15 complimentary. He also made a pitch to save printing & postage expenses for the newsletters, if members would elect to receive them via email.
- Archive Committee: A brief report from Andrea relayed the continued cataloging being performed, noting there are several hundreds of pictures now online for viewing; also continuing to ask for photograph submissions from the membership.
- Artifact Committee: Rusty informed all present that a new acquisition policy is needed regarding all collections. How we acquire items, care for them and de-accession when necessary with all proper procedures, letters of acquisition, etc. is in the works. This will also function as a guide for the Archive Committee.

The plans for the coming year are to complete an inventory of items in the House, the Barn & the Carpenter's Shop. We have acquired through donations a camera, lights, black velvet & white fabric for photographic backgrounds; which may also be used by the Archive Committee. Voluntary help with the project is also welcomed!

- Nominations: Kit noted the Officers are currently serving in a 2-year term, and therefore only committee chairs and

members-at-large are on the slate for this year, as: Membership Chair, John Bolduc; Publications Chair, Dan Ryan; Archives Chair, Andrea Buka; Newsletter, Kit Foster; Member-at-Large, Scott Buka; Artifact Chair, Rusty Godino. Kit asked for additional nominations from the floor. Dan Weaver offered to stand for Member-at-Large. John moved for nominations to be closed; seconded by Rusty and approved.

**Old Business:** None

### **New Business:**

- Elections: Kit called for a voice vote on the slate of committee chairs; approved unanimously by the members present.
- Budget: Kit presented a Financial History report of the current year's budget with comparisons of the Actual budget to 6-9-15, and estimated budget to 6-30-15, along with the Proposed 2015-16 budget for review.

The Proposed 2015-2016 budget shows Operating Receipts of \$2,330 -a slight increase over the current year. The Operating Expenses total \$4,250 also a slight increase, largely for cataloging, programs, Research Room, newsletters, and insurance. This would incur a net loss of \$1,920. Kit highlighted our frugality this past year, and a forward look to improved contributions this coming year. Scott Buka moved to accept the budget as proposed, seconded by John Bolduc and approved by the members.

Motion to adjourn was made by Lee Moore and quickly seconded! The meeting ended at 3:30 PM. as the membership then enjoyed a wonderful program presented by Susan McGee Bailey on her friendship with a most interesting woman: artist, teacher and "independent thinker" Georgiana Fulton (1869-1967). This was followed by a pot-luck feast thoroughly enjoyed by all.

## **Executive Board Meeting July 15th, 2015**

The Executive Board of the Ledyard Historical Society convened at the Nathan Lester House on July 15th, 2015. President Kit Foster called the meeting to order at 5:13 PM. In attendance were President Kit Foster, Vice-President Vin Godino, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Neal Ganz, Committee Chairs Rusty Godino and John Bolduc, Member-at-Large Dan Weaver, Guest: Jill Foster

**Correspondence:** Kit received a note from the Ledyard Fair regarding our participation if we choose to do, which the Board voted to pass on this year. He also received a thank-you note from John Burnett, the Boy Scout who created our new sandwich board signs for an Eagle Scout project.

Kit gave the Treasurer our portion from of the donations received from the "Call Me Lizzie" program co-sponsored with the Senior Center and the Friends of Ledyard Libraries...\$33.

**Treasurer's Report:** Neal submitted his report showing account balances of \$2,661.72 for our checking account, and \$10,662.32 in the savings account. The total Balance of Funds is \$13,324.04. Figures not posted as of July 15th included receipts of \$125 received at the annual meeting, and expenses of \$200 (\$100 Fellowship Hall rental and \$100 for entertainment at the Old Fashioned Fourth event. The net worth stands at \$13,249.04. The report was accepted as presented. He also confirmed he would present a fiscal year-end report ending June 30th, 2015.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Membership:** John reported we have 45 paid memberships (an additional 2 were received after he printed his report showing 43), and 26 unpaid. We have 15 complimenteries and 94 inactive members.

**Archives:** Andrea was unable to attend the meeting, but sent in her report which is included in full following the minutes.

**Artifact Committee:** Rusty reported she received two school bells donated by Sue

Billing. Lee added we received a donation at the House, of period uniforms from the 4-H Girls that were made during the Bicentennial. It was decided we would give them to Janet Barnett.

**Second District Schoolhouse:** Kit offered to seek a legal opinion from a local attorney regarding our ownership of the building.

**Publications:** Neal said he received an accounting of books sold from Dan Ryan.

### **Old Business:**

- Bequest of Stoddard spoon: Nothing new to report.
- Bequest of cruet set: Rusty noted the set is in poor condition...broken pieces & highly tarnished, and doesn't believe it is appropriate for display.

### **New Business:**

- Vin has planned to obtain quotes from several salvage companies, to remove the large storage unit on the property. Dan Weaver will join him and Rusty to sort through some of the contents (chairs, benches, etc.) to determine what should still be saved.
- Jill reported she has some old audio tapes from a bus tour with Jan Bell, about 15 years old, but has nothing to play the micro-cassettes. Discussion centered on obtaining needed audio/visual equipment to replay or view older film footage & audio recordings. A motion was made & approved to authorize up to \$150 for the Archive Committee to purchase such equipment.

The meeting ended at 6:45pm.

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



Railroad Station, Gale's Ferry, Conn.

*In 1899, 15 trains stopped daily at Gales Ferry, the only fully-equipped station on the lower end of the Norwich to Groton line..*  
*Ledyard Historical Society Archives*

## Pay your dues, recruit a member?

Our membership year runs nominally from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. **Dues for 2015-2016 are now due and payable.** If your dues are paid through 2016 (check your mailing label), please use this form to recruit a new member.

### Ledyard Historical Society Membership Year 2015-2016

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.



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## Who's Who at Ledyard Historical Society 2015-2016

President: Kit Foster

president@ledyardhistory.org

Vice President: Vin Godino vdgodino@snet.net

Secretary: Lee Moore secretary@ledyardhistory.org

Treasurer: Neal Ganz treasurer@ledyardhistory.org

Membership: John Bolduc jfbceo@tvconnect.net

Newsletter: Kit Foster acorn@ledyardhistory.org

Artifacts: Rusty Godino sgodino@snet.net

Archives: Andrea Buka

research@ledyardhistory.org

Publications: Dan Ryan 860-464-6723

### **Board Members-at-Large**

Scott Buka

scott@scottbuka.com

Dan Weaver