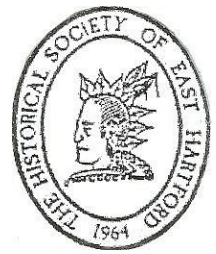


Historical Society of East Hartford

Newsletter, May 2014



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The month of May has arrived and the spring season is in full bloom. Our Museum buildings at Martin Park have awakened from their winter slumber. The first paranormal group of the season has already completed one investigation of our buildings and we hope to host many more during the year. At the last regular meeting in March, we said the Historical Society will be involved in two state-wide events next month in June. Member participation is encouraged so please note the dates and times:

- As a part of the 2014 Connecticut Trails Day weekend, the Historical Society will be sponsoring a short educational walk in the Burnside section of town on Saturday, June 7th between 11 and 12 o'clock. The tour will start at Bicentennial Square where we'll talk about General Rochambeau's encampment, then proceed over to the Hockanum River falls where the first saw mills operated in the 1600s. Following that there will be an optional walk on the Linear Park Trail.
- We will again be participating in Connecticut Open House Day on Saturday, June 14th between 1 and 4 o'clock at the Park. All three of our Museum buildings will be open that day and if we get nice weather, the largest turn-out of the season will be expected. Last year it was our busiest day because of all the great publicity from the State Department of Tourism. This will be our only opening during the month of June, so volunteers are really needed.

At its meeting in April, the Historical Society appointed 3 Executive Board members to the nominating committee to elect a new slate of officers for the 2014-2015 year. Pursuant to our By-Laws, 2 individuals from the general membership will be elected at our May regular meeting so that this committee has its required 5 members. I'm really hoping for some participation here so please consider helping us out.

During the summer, we plan to have the Museum buildings open for Tours every Sunday afternoon (except for holiday weekends) during July and August. Spring cleaning first has to be done to remove the dust, cobwebs and vacuum. The date for cleaning at the Huguenot House is tentatively set for Saturday May 31. A sign-up sheet will be made available at our May 21 meeting for house clean-up day and for volunteering as docents on June 14 and Sunday afternoons from July 13th through August 24.

Our May regular meeting will be at the Hillstown Grange instead of the Selden Brewer House. Because of the larger sized venue at the Grange and the interesting program, I'm hoping for better than average attendance. Please check your calendars before arriving so that you can select a date or two on the sign-up sheets. Our Museum needs to be comfortably staffed for the 8 days we are open this season.

Craig Johnson, President

PROGRAM – THE HISTORY OF THE HILLSTOWN GRANGE

With roots in rural and agricultural history, the National Grange is our nation's oldest agricultural organization providing farming services, family activities and support to the community that dates back nearly 150 years. Founded in 1867, the Grange initially served to help both southern and northern farmers recover from the ravages of the Civil War.

We once had many active granges throughout the towns of Connecticut, the first being organized in the Town of Stafford in 1874. Connecticut was the 33rd state in the nation to incorporate the Grange philosophy into its culture. Stafford's Grange # 1 was followed quickly by the Town of Windsor until nearly every Connecticut town had its own Grange organization. Many were fortunate to build their own meeting places.

While farming has become almost non-existent in parts of New England, the Granges still support the rural community activities that remain. Today, a network of grange facilities dots the state map where farming endeavors, such as raising animals and annual crops, are still on-going.

East Hartford remains one of these communities with a still active membership, named Hillstown Grange #87. Our grange was founded in the year 1888 at a time when the grange membership not only included farms in East Hartford but in South Manchester and northern Glastonbury, as well, an area known locally as, "Hillstown". To the right is a photo of Hillstown Grange members and the Grange Hall in the 1930s.



The Hillstown #87 building, located at 617 Hills Street in East Hartford, will be the site for our last Historical Society meeting of the year. Members and officers of the Grange will welcome us to their facility, walk us through their historic building, and talk about their National, State and Town history.

The meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served. Parking is available in the lot on the west side of the building.

Bette Daraskevich, Program Chair

**Remember: 7:00 pm Wednesday May 21, 2014 at the Hillstown Grange, 617 Hills Street, East Hartford
Information 860-568-5188**

FRIENDS OF CENTER CEMETERY ANNUAL ACTIVITY DAY

10am – 2pm Saturday May 17th

This is a good opportunity to visit the cemetery, look for an ancestor's grave (we'll have the list with us), pay your respects, do some weed trimming or ask questions about the work we do.

We have a group of students from Goodwin College coming to work with us again this year. They have become an important part of the process to help us clean some stones and reset toppled ones.

Come on down and learn how to clean your family stone (no bleach!!!!) or take a good photograph using our mirror.

A typical project at Center Cemetery would be the stone work being done by volunteers in the 2012 photo, right.

If you'd like to help us out please come, or if you have any questions contact Ruthie Brown at shapbrown@cox.net or call her at 860-643-5652.



CIVIL WAR SNAPSHOT

Unfortunately the civil war item that was almost ready for inclusion in this newsletter was lost when my computer lost its hard drive or the software disintegrated or ...? Since I have still not heard anything from the computer gurus on any possible reclamation of data or repair to the computer and since time is moving along and the time to redo the work is long, I have decided to send out this newsletter in two parts. This is part one with the basic news. I will send out a second part later with the "Snapshot" included.

This is a first in my 20 something years of putting out the newsletter. The moral to the story is always to backup whatever you're working on in a space separate from your working computer. I should have known better. My apologies.

Historical Society of East Hartford

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Individual \$15, 1 address \$20, Student \$10,
Patron \$50

Deadline Sept Newsletter – Aug 30, 2014



May Program

Program: History of the Hillstown Grange

Date: Wed, May 21

Time: 7pm

Where: Hillstown Grange,
617 Hills St, E Htfd