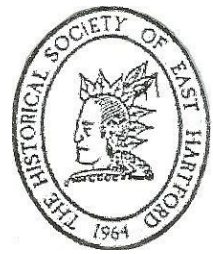


# Historical Society of East Hartford

Newsletter, March 2012



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

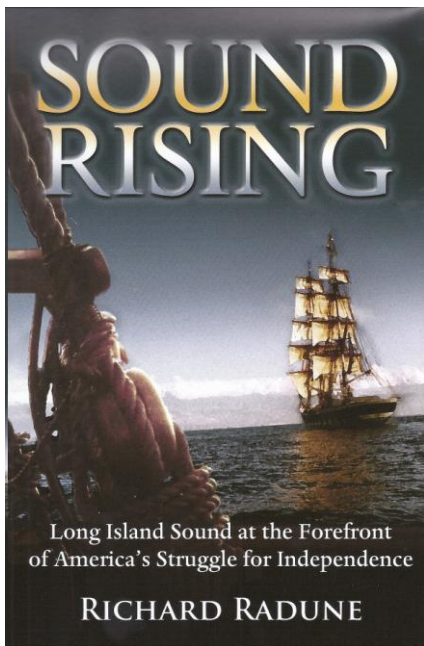
Well, it isn't spring yet and the trees and plants in my yard are mighty confused what season of the year we are actually in at the moment. The snow is falling on startled daffodil buds as I write this and the First Day of Spring (the Vernal Equinox) is still weeks away, falling on Tuesday, March 20th. Tomorrow's temperatures .. . . . . who can tell???

Some members of our Executive Board have been attending planning sessions with the Podunk Living History group. The event has been postponed twice due to different complications, but the most recent have to do with the Permits that the Town of East Hartford issues to the organizers.

We had been invited by the Mayor to act as hosts for the event, as well as participating in the three-day activities. This offer was unanimously accepted by the Executive Board at the last Board Meeting. Unfortunately, the Town has recently lost both the Podunk Blue Grass Festival and the Beer Fest. These activities will no longer take place here in East Hartford and unless the current administration can resolve certain internal problems, neither will the Podunk Living History. While I am hopeful that such a resolution can be worked out, we are currently prevented from moving forward with plans for a Spring Festival involving Martin Park and the historical complex we maintain at that site. But, we will be re-opening the complex in the Spring and continuing to give guided tours of the facilities.

My good news is that the Connecticut Humanities Council has been talking to the Audio Tour Committee about funding the audio presentation through their Heritage Revitalization Fund. The Town Grants Administrator, Claire Fravel, has had contact with the CHC and we have started to pursue the project in earnest. This would involve a two-stage process: planning and taping. The Society has the detailed scripts that were prepared for us by Doris Suessman, Mary Dowden and Betty Squires and we fully intend to use them to round out the presentation. I will fill you in on the details at the Membership Meeting on the 21st. See you on the 21st! *Bette Daraskevich, Pres.*

## PROGRAM TO FEATURE RICHARD RADUNE, AUTHOR OF SOUND RISING



The Historical Society is pleased to present as its guest speaker author and independent historian Richard Radune of Branford, CT. Mr. Radune is the author of a recent non-fiction book entitled Sound Rising. This book covers the maritime history of Long Island Sound during the critical years between 1750 and 1820 and details how the Sound was at the forefront of America's struggle for independence.

Mr. Radune has developed a dynamic PowerPoint computer generated slide program. This presentation relates the Sound's importance as being at the forefront of American trade with the West Indies. Also, its location placed it in a position to influence the course of history. The program covers the Sound's role in the capture of the French bastion of Fort Louisbourg, rampant smuggling, the American Revolutionary War, the Undeclared War with France and the War of 1812. We are now in the Bicentennial observation of the War of 1812, this being our second War with Great Britain. Although the War was never too popular in the New England states, the Connecticut shoreline did experience an impact.

Following the program, Mr. Radune will offer for sale copies of Sound Rising and will do a book signing. This Wednesday evening program at the

Raymond Library, March 21 at 7pm, is free and open to the public. For questions, please call Craig Johnson at 860-568-2884.

Craig Johnson

## SAD NEWS

It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Mary Dowden in early February. Mary was an avid historical scholar and an invaluable resource person to our Society. Her love for the Town of East Hartford and her devotion to the Martin Preservation Park, especially the Huguenot House, and Center Cemetery was a concern unmatched by all but her mother, Doris Suessman.

Mary was the one we all went to when there was a historical question we couldn't answer. She'd find the answer... She was a preservationist who in ways captured the colonial past and brought it to life here. She, her sister Gerry, and Doris bought antique items to showcase life in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Huguenot House. She picked out the material and hand made the house's curtains and bed hangings. At the end of the season she hand washed them as they did some 200 or so years ago... She loved to talk about local history. She led tours of the house and Center Cemetery... She was researcher for the "Historic East Hartford Connecticut" map made to celebrate the bicentennial and the Self-Guided Historical Walking Tour booklet for Center Cemetery... She studied the paranormal at the Huguenot House. With Doris she introduced us to Benny its friendly ghost... In all her activities Mary was ever ready to offer help along with her yummy pecan tarts... These comments only begin to describe her.

While the details of her demise are still unknown, Mary's twin sister is up from Virginia handling arrangements. We should know more soon. In the meantime, I would encourage those who were close to Mary to send their respects to her sister, Mrs. Gerry Gray, 1505 Barn Swallow Court, Chesapeake, VA 23321. I have recommended to the Executive Board that we make a donation in Mary's name to the Memorial Fund.

Bette Daraskevich, President

## THE LARRABYS OF LARRABEE STREET

If you have paid a visit to the Huguenot House in the past, you might have noticed the framed document that hangs over the secretary's desk in the Gold Room; a yellowed, ink-spotted 4 x 6 scrap of paper handwritten in an ornate cursive.:

*"Scarborough Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> day of 1779*

*This may certify that Ezekiel Larraby went into the Continental Services*

*in the year*

*1776 in Capt. Blaisfield's Company, in Col. Wigelsworth's Regiment*

*the said*

*Ezekiel Larraby was son of Samuel Larraby and under the age of twenty*

*one years old.*

*Samuel Small } Committee*

*Samuel March } of Scarb.*

*Reuben Fogg Col.*

According to the Records of the First Church of Scarborough, Admissions and Baptisms, 1743-1762, (Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder, vols. 1-4 Portland, Me.: S.M. Watson, 1884-7) Ezekiel Larraby was born Nov. 21, 1756 to Samuel and Sarah Brown Larraby in Scarborough, Maine and would have been 19 years of age in 1776.

Ezekiel does not appear to have survived beyond 1778 as indicated by the records of the Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution; Volume 9 (Maine was once part of Massachusetts)

(pg.509) Laraby, Ezekiel, Andover (also given Scarborough)Private, Capt. Smart's co., Col. Calvin Smith's regt.; Continental Army pay accounts for service from March 7, 1777, to May 1, 1778; residence, Andover; reported deceased; also, Capt. Nicholas Blasdel's co., Col. Edward Wigglesworth's regt.; return dated Camp Valley Forge, Feb. 5, 1778; residence, Scarborough; enlisted for town of Andover; mustered by County Muster Master Cushing; also, same co. and regt.; muster roll for May, 1778, dated Camp Valley Forge; reported on furlough; also reported supposed to be dead.

(pg.525) Larraby, Ezekiel, Scarborough.

Return of men raised to serve in the Continental Army from Capt. Benjamin Larrabee's Company, Col. Reuben Fogg's (3d Cumberland Co.) regt. [year not given]; residence, Scarborough; enlisted for town of Scarborough; joined Capt. John Skillin's co., Col. Francis's regt. (also given Capt. Blaisdel's co., Col. Wigglesworth's regt.); enlistment, 3 years.

While Ezekiel was unmarried and presumed deceased, his services were still noted as shown in the document above signed by his former regimental commander, Reuben Fogg. Ezekiel has a distant relationship to the Larrabee family of East Hartford.

Most of the streets in East Hartford were named for prominent families who settled down in the town, raised their families and served as its leading citizens. Larrabee Street was named for the family of William Wellington Larraby. He was born 1795 in Charlestown, Massachusetts where his mother's (Margaret Wellington) parents owned and operated a tavern. He was originally a native of Scarborough, ME, and the first Larrabee to settle in East Hartford when he married his first wife, Mary Gaines in 1817. William married three more East Hartford women, Thankful Abbey in 1819, Amelia Roberts in 1826 and Lydia Bidwell in 1857; and he fathered a total of 9 children(Connecticut Town Marriage Records, pre-1870 (Barbour Collection, Town of East Hartford). He lived on Burnside Avenue in Burnside and worked in the nearby paper mills.

*"My grandfather, Jonathan Larrabee enlisted at Scarborough, Maine  
June 1775 and served six months as private under Cap't Strout of Mass.  
Also, in Dec of 1776 he served three months under Cap't Larrabee and  
Col Fogg of Mass."*

Both William Wellington Larabee and Ezekial Larabee trace their family origins through Thomas Lariby (1660-1723) and Elizabeth Rowe of Scarborough to the original immigrant from England, William Lariby (b. 1585), who died in Maine (date and place unknown). Please note the evolution of the spelling of the surname.

Original military papers dating from the Revolutionary War period are extremely rare and for one scrap to have survived over 230 years is nothing short of remarkable. While we do not have any papers relating directly to William Wellington Larabee, this document pertaining to one of his ancestors is still one of the Historical Society's proudest possessions.

*Submitted by Bette Daraskevich*

## **EAST HARTFORD MEMORIES BY CRAIG AND MARY JOHNSON**

Craig: Although I grew up in Manchester, I often visited my paternal grandparents who lived at 76 Silver Lane during the 1950's. Those were some of the happiest memories of my life. I still remember the tracks on the center of Main Street and the trains that used to lumber slowly along to their destination. My father, who was raised in East Hartford, used to work in Hartford at Stackpole, Moore and Tryon. Many times my mother and I rode the bus to meet him there; then we would stop at Skees Diner on the way home and have one of their tasty eats. We liked shopping at the old J.M. Fields store on Silver Lane. Also on hot summer days, I liked the old wading pool at Martin Park.

Mary: I first came to East Hartford as a transplant from South Carolina. We lived in an apartment building on Connecticut Boulevard. It was located over a restaurant owned by Angie and Milton Panteles from Greece. My mother worked for them and Cathy, my younger sister, used to have her playpen in a corner of the restaurant. I played all up and down the dike over to the train tracks. There used to be an old lady by the tracks who raised goats. Our apartment was about half a block from the Bulkeley Bridge. Carvels used to be across the Blvd at an angle. There was a car place on the corner, a radiator shop, the restaurant, another car place and a trucking company. I used to play in and on the tires; they were huge. At some point we moved across the Boulevard into a three family

house and it was in that neighborhood I met my best friend Judy. The Meadow School is where we attended grade school. We used to take pieces of cardboard to slide down the hill that was behind the old Wonder Bread Bakery. We also loved to go for penny candy at a small hole-in-the-wall store on Pleasant Street. During High School I lived on Columbus Circle and my first job was at the Travelers Data Center, commuting to Hartford on the green Silver Lane bus. I later on lived in apartments by St John's Episcopal Church and across from the old Topps.

## **ITEMS FROM THE FCC, CGN, CSL, and MHS**

### **Friends of Center Cemetery (FCC) Activity Day Workshop May 19th 10am-3pm at Center Cemetery East Hartford.**

Friends of Center Cemetery in East Hartford will hold their next Activity Day on May 19th from 10 am to 3 pm. For those that have been asking for a workshop on "cleaning and resetting downed stones" this is a good opportunity for you to join us. Come prepared to work; bring your own gloves, bucket and scrub brush if you have it. Bring a bag lunch; friends will supply water and beverages. There are a few local restaurants nearby also if you wish to walk to them for a lunch break. Come for the day or for a few hours. RSVP [centercemetery@gmail.com](mailto:centercemetery@gmail.com) if you are planning on coming or have any questions.

### **CT Gravestone Network (CGN) Annual Symposium Saturday March 31st, 2012**

**South End Senior Center, 70 Canterbury Street, East Hartford, CT**

Doors open at 9am and the last lecture is at 3:00pm. Refreshments and Lunch Snacks are available for a donation. Admission is \$10.00 to the public and \$5.00 for CGN, CGS & FCC members.

This is a day devoted to sharing history and all that encompasses caring and protecting our historic burying places. The program consists of a room full of vendors and displays, and the following lectures starting at 9:30: "What to Look for in Researching Old Cemeteries", "The Mysterious Peet Burying Ground - of New Milford", Paris' famous Pere Lachaise Cemetery, "CT Militia Who Fought in the War of 1812", "East Haddam Stone Carver John Isham". For more information email [Ctgravelady@cox.net](mailto:Ctgravelady@cox.net), call Ruth Brown at 860-643-5652, visit the events page at <http://www.ctgravestones.com>.

### **CT State Library (CSL)**

A fairly recent accession of various East Hartford holdings - Civil War era and later military records, financial records from 1837 - 1946, various 20th century boards and committees, and more - is now outlined on the CSL page [http://www.cslib.org/archives/finding\\_aids/RG062\\_043.html](http://www.cslib.org/archives/finding_aids/RG062_043.html).

### **Manchester Historical Society (MHS) Civil War Talks**

March 11 "CT, Manchester, and the Civil War", John Maston; April 22 "CT Troops at Gettysburg", Connie Satton; April 27 Dr. Matthew Warshauer; for details [http://www.manchesterhistory.org/MHS3\\_Events.html](http://www.manchesterhistory.org/MHS3_Events.html)

## **CONNECTICUT DAY AT ANTIETAM April 21, 2012**

For all Civil War buffs this 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011-2015) is an opportune time to travel, to learn, and to ponder this defining event in our nation's past as numerous reenactments, talks, dedications, etc are being planned. An event of special interest to Connecticut is the upcoming April 21st "Connecticut Day at Antietam" commemoration of Connecticut's 8th, 11th, 14th, and 16th volunteer regiments. The men of these regiments fought alongside other states' regiments at Antietam on September 17, 1862 on what is still the bloodiest day in American history.

The CCSU and the Connecticut Civil War Round Table will be sponsoring a 3 day trip to Antietam National Battlefield on April 20-22 along with an April 15th information forum on the trip at CCSU. All are welcome. For detailed information and to register, follow the "Connecticut Day at Antietam" link from CCSU's 150th Anniversary of the Civil War site, <http://www.ccsu.edu/civilwar>.

To learn more about the planned happenings at “Connecticut Day at Antietam” on April 21 and why this date was chosen for “Connecticut Day at Antietam” instead of the battle’s anniversary date of September 17 visit the website of the Connecticut Civil War Round Table <http://www.ctcwr.org> and check out their page.

## CONNECTICUT TO ARMS: 1862

### Civil War Sesquicentennial Event

September 28-30, 2012

Wickham Park - 1329 West Middle Turnpike, Manchester, CT 06042

Marc Bassos, Connecticut Civil War Commemoration Commission (CCWCC) Coordinator / Re-enactor Liaison, has emailed us that for over 10 years there has not been a Civil War re-enactment at Wickham Park. But this year the Wickham Park Foundation has offered a one-time use of the park for a battle re-enactment and living history event to mark the 150th commemoration of the Civil War. More than 500 military and civilian re-enactors are expected to participate. And unlike preceding years when re-enactments were held in the park’s back fields, this event will occur in the front of the park.

This 2012, 150th Anniversary of Connecticut in the Civil War battle reenactment and living history event is presented by the CCWCC and the Wickham Park Foundation and is supported by Central Connecticut State University, the Connecticut State University System, the Travelers Insurance Company, and the collaborative effort of more than 75 museums, libraries, historical societies, and state, local and private organizations, businesses and citizens – from the CCSU website <http://www.ccsu.edu/civilwar>.

This event will be the 2nd of the Commission’s events planned throughout the state during the five year Civil War commemoration period (2011-2015). The 1st was last year’s event at New Britain’s Stanley Quarter Park.

The public is welcome. Re-enactors are invited to sign on to help make American Civil War history come alive. Check the Connecticut Civil War Sesquicentennial site at <http://www.ccsu.edu/civilwar> and/or contact Marc Bassos at ([marc183@yahoo.com](mailto:marc183@yahoo.com)) for more information.

## CIVIL WAR SNAPSHOT, MAY 1861 – AUG 1861<sup>1</sup>

- May 3, 1861 Lincoln calls for 42,000 3 year volunteers, 18,000 sailors; expands the regular army to 22,714; the realization is now that this will not be a 3 months war; the 4<sup>th</sup> CT Volunteer Infantry (CVI) and the 5<sup>th</sup> CVI are mustered in under this call; in Jan 1862, the 4<sup>th</sup> will become the 1st CT Heavy Artillery
- May 3, 1861 Gen Winfield Scott, commander of the army, proposes to blockade southern ports and to retake the Mississippi River to divide the Confederacy; his plan is ridiculed as too costly in time, men and supplies; the opposition wants a successful, quick overland attack on Richmond to end the war
- May 6, 1861 Arkansas secedes; it is the 9<sup>th</sup> state to leave the Union; 26 remain
- May 9, 1861 Jefferson Davis calls for 400,000 men for 3 years or the duration; overwhelming response; St Louis, Missouri civilians attack pro union forces marching captured pro southern forces through city; 28 civilians and 2 soldiers killed
- May 13, 1861 Britain declares neutrality; accords both the north and the south the rights of belligerents; it recognizes the south’s separate status
- May 20, 1861 Confederate Congress votes to make Richmond, VA the Confederacy’s second capital; North Carolina secedes; it is the 10<sup>th</sup> state to secede  
Kentucky declares neutrality; has southern sentiment but will not secede
- May 24, 1861 Fort Monroe, VA, Union Gen Butler refuses to return 3 slaves; calls them ‘contrabands of war’; hundreds of thousands of ‘contrabands’ will enter union lines in the war
- June 8, 1861 Tennessee votes 2 to 1 for secession; 11<sup>th</sup> state to secede; east Tennessee remains strongly pro Union
- June 10, 1861 Dorothea Dix is superintendent of women nurses for the Union army: she will establish hospitals, care for Union, Confederate wounded; and set up the army’s 1<sup>st</sup> professional nurse corps
- June 11, 1861 Pro Union citizens of western VA meet to separate from VA and form a pro Union state

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/10/29/opinion/20101029-civil-war.html>; see also [The Library of Congress Illustrated Timeline of the Civil War](#), Wagner, Margaret E., Little and Brown & Co., NY, NY; 2011.

- June 13, 1861 Sanitary Commission begun; will be large, effective civilian organization caring for sick soldiers
- June 30, 1861 Below New Orleans Raphael Semmes runs his ship, the CSS Sumter, past the blockader USS Brooklyn into the Gulf of Mexico; his legendary career as a blockade runner starts
- July 21, 1861 First Battle of Bull Run in northern VA; Union forces under Gen McDowell are defeated, flee with civilian spectators back to Washington in the “Great Skedaddle”; 4700 casualties<sup>2,3,4</sup>
- July 22, 1861 Gen McClellan takes charge from Gen McDowell of what will become the Army of the Potomac
- July 22-23, 1861 Lincoln signs 2 bills asking for 1,000,000 volunteers to serve for 3 years
- Aug 3, 1861 Congress authorizes Navy to build 3 prototype ironclads
- Aug 5, 1861 Congress passes 1st Income Tax: 3% for income under \$10,000; 5% for income over; Confederate Congress passes property tax about this time, 0.5% of assessed property value, gets little revenue
- Aug 6, 1861 Congress passes the first Confiscation Act: contrabands who had been employed “directly by the Confederate forces” are no longer slaves; but what is their status?
- Aug 10, 1861 Battle of Wilson’s Creek, Missouri<sup>5</sup>; Union forces withdraw after CT Gen Lyons killed
- Aug 1861 1st Squadron CT Volunteer Cavalry recruited to help build the federal cavalry; war department takes control of the CT squadron, consolidates it with the 2<sup>nd</sup> New York, Harris Light Cavalry
- Aug 15, 1861 To meet his quota Gov. Buckingham orders the formation of 4 additional, 3 years CT regiments, the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>; the 9<sup>th</sup> is made up of Irish men and will be known as Connecticut’s Irish regiment

### Historical Society of East Hartford

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**Phone:** 860-568-5188, **Email:** hseh@hseh.org, eknose@aol.com  
**Web site:** <http://www.hseh.org>  
**May Newsletter Deadline: April 27, 2012**



### March Program

**Date:** Wednesday, March 21  
**Time:** 7pm  
**Where:** Raymond Library  
**Program:** Sound Rising

<sup>2</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Connecticut volunteer regiments were recruited under Lincoln’s first call for three months’ volunteers on April 15, 1861. Connecticut was asked for 1 regiment. But enthusiasm ran so high that three were organized and accepted by the government. With a few individual exceptions the regiments were mustered in: the 1<sup>st</sup> on April 22-24, 1861, the 2<sup>nd</sup> on May 7, 1861, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> on May 11, 14, 1861. These three with the 1<sup>st</sup> Maine comprised the Connecticut Brigade.

<sup>3</sup> An easy reading book with touches of humor is “Wooden Nutmegs” at Bull Run A Humourous Account of Some of the Exploits and Experiences of the Three Months Connecticut Brigade, and the Part They Bore in the National Stampede, Fry, Frinkle, Hartford: George L. Coburn, Steam Print, 1872. A digital version is available from google books or a reprint from amazon.com.

<sup>4</sup> East Hartford: Its History and Traditions, Goodwin, Joseph O., published for the Raymond Library Company by Picton Press of Camden, Maine, October 1992. It is a copy of Goodwin’s 1879 book.

Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States, Compiled by Authority of the General Assembly under Directions of the Adjutants-General, Hartford, Conn., Press of the Case, Lockwood and Brainard Company, 1889.

On pages 208-211 Goodwin gives a list of volunteers in the Connecticut Regiments from East Hartford, 1861-1865, based on the 1869 “Catalogue of Connecticut Volunteers”. The 1889 Record of Service... was compiled to correct the errors in the “Catalogue”. The one East Hartford name Goodwin and the Record... agree on as having volunteered for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> Connecticut volunteer regiment is Richard W. Roberts who served as private in the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment and afterward as captain in the 25<sup>th</sup> regiment. The Goodwin list names John McCormick as serving in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Record... does not. The Record... lists Charles M. Shailer with residence in East Hartford as serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> and later serving as Sergt in the 7<sup>th</sup> regiment but with a residence at this later enlistment in East Haddam. Goodwin’s list does not include his name. There is an opportunity here for some research.

<sup>5</sup> Although black men were not permitted to join the Union regiments at this time, some did manage to join surreptitiously. George Keckley was born a slave to a slave mother, Elizabeth Keckley. Elizabeth managed to buy freedom for herself and George a few years before the Civil War. George was light and could pass as white. As a “white” man he was allowed to enlist in the federal 1st Missouri Volunteers. He was killed in his first battle at Wilson’s Creek. Elizabeth was Mrs. Lincoln’s modiste and would become her confidante. Read Elizabeth’s story Behind the Scenes or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House in electronic edition at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/keckley/menu.html>.