

Historical Society of East Hartford

Newsletter, May 2012



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's "Cinderella" time again and we are opening up the facilities once again for the summer season at Martin Preservation Park. The Town's Park and Recreation opening will be Memorial Day weekend, from Saturday, May 26th through Monday, May 28th. But, we begin beforehand by sweeping and dusting away the cobwebs from the corners and making the Huguenot House shine in preparation for another year's parade of guests who come to view our little section of East Hartford's history. Our efforts would require a crew of 5-7 people to help us with Spring Cleaning the three buildings. Our crew usually meets after 12 noon, on a Saturday before we open, to get the area tidied up and clean. If you can spare an hour or two on Saturday, May 19th, please bring a broom, maybe a shop vac and some paper towels. We supply the water - for drinking and cleaning. A sign-up will make the rounds during our next meeting.

I'm hoping that Burnside Avenue is now raised sufficiently through grading and paving so automobiles can access the driveway into the Park. As recently as a few weeks ago, the entry was cordoned off on Burnside Avenue while the street was being re-graded and the pavement was lowered at least two feet in some sections. Parking has been in the K of C across from the entrance and please do send some business their way. Except for the street work crews for patrons, I understand this realignment has impacted their sales negatively.

Save the Date! The Annual Dinner Meeting is being scheduled for Wednesday, September 19th. This will be another great meal from Becker's Catering and we are returning to the First Congregational Church hall and newly refurbished kitchen for this event. We haven't asked them to change the menu.... just more of the same delicious cooking. We will post more information in the September newsletter. While you are attending, your annual dues can be dropped off with the head of Membership, Eileen Driscoll.

Our May speaker will highlight the achievements of a Nurse from the Civil War period, Clara Harlowe Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, and Mary Edwards Walker, the only female Union Surgeon, also of the same period. There were some Civil War heroines of note, these two ladies having been honored as exceptional patriots for their services to the war effort.

See you at our next regular meeting on the 16th of May.

Bette Daraskevich. President



Clara Barton, Lib. of Congress.

CIVIL WAR PROGRAM ON CLARA BARTON AND MARY E. WALKER

The Historical Society is honored to present as its guest speaker former state senator and Manchester Community College professor Mary Ann Handley who will discuss in detail the lives of two famous 19th century American women, Clara Barton and Mary Walker. During the Civil War, both women saw the horrors and anguish of the wounded soldiers and did their best to aid and comfort them. Clara Barton provided care as a nurse and humanitarian. Dr. Mary Walker was the first female U.S. Army surgeon and was the only woman ever to receive our nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

Following the Civil War, both women had successful achievements. Clara Barton is

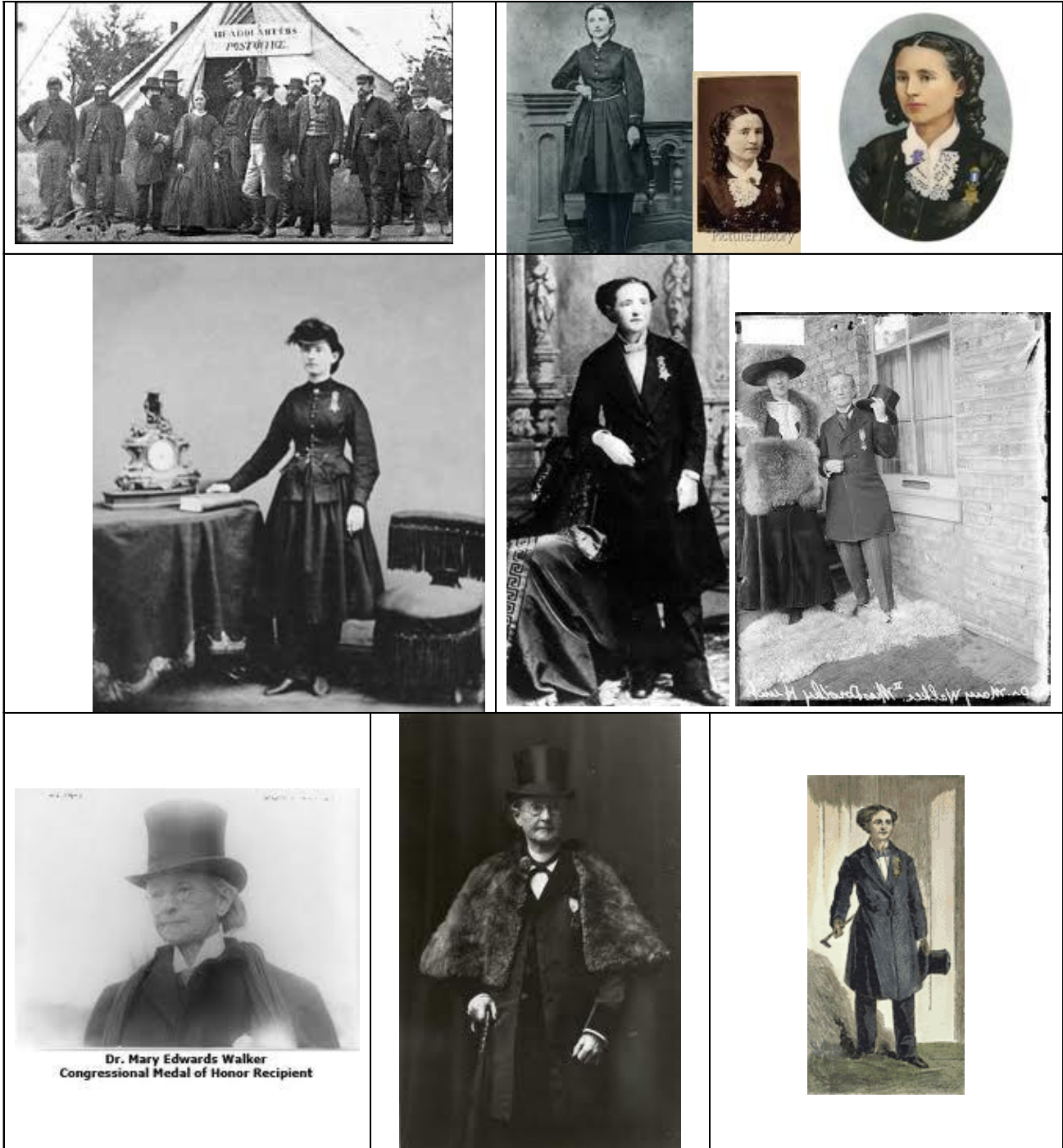
best known for organizing the American Red Cross serving as its first president. Mary Walker became an ardent feminist and became very involved in the women's suffrage movement.

The Wednesday evening program at the Raymond Library is free and open to the public. A short business meeting starts at 7pm. The program follows. For questions, please call Craig Johnson at 860-568-2884. Craig Johnson

The East Hartford Historical Society

The East Hartford Historical Society welcomes Mary Ann Handley, retired senator and college professor, to our May 16, 2012 Meeting at the Raymond Library. Come to our programs!

Images of Dr. Mary Edwards Walker:



Dr. Mary Edwards Walker
Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient

Ad is by Susan Barlow. Images of Dr. Walker are from the Library of Congress site and Google Books.

Mary Dowden, longtime supporter of things historical in East Hartford died on Feb 11, 2012. For many years she researched this town's history and helped record it; preserved some of the town's past artifacts; attempted to re-create something of old techniques; told the town's old stories. Anyone - who has read the Self-Guided Historical Walking Tour of Center Cemetery or studied the East Hartford bicentennial/historical map, or read her writings, taken a tour of the 1761 Bemont House, watched the paranormal investigations in that house, admired its antique furniture, or seen, among other handmade items, the bed cover and hangings she made for that house, etc – has seen her work. Individuals have learned from her and from her work. The Historical Society of East Hartford and Friends of Center Cemetery have learned from her.

In recent years Mary's health worsened. Her activities lessened.

The following is one of her writings. It introduced an historical series on East Hartford churches written by Mary and published in the East Hartford Gazette in 1983-1984 to commemorate this town's bicentennial. The following is offered in her memory.

FIRST IN HISTORICAL SERIES

First Church organized in 1699

By MARY C. DOWDEN

Historian, Historical Society of East Hartford

“The church was not merely a religious institution of the English settlers of Connecticut – it was the governing body and the social center as well. Church attendance was mandatory for all citizens in good standing and support of the church and its ministers was a legal, as well as a moral, obligation.

“Thus, the isolation of East Hartford settlers of the far side of the Great River during winter storms and spring floods worked severe hardship on the good Puritan inhabitants of our future township, and by May 1694, the people of East Hartford felt numerous enough and prosperous enough to petition the General Court for “the Liberty of a minister on their side of the river.” With this event, the story of East Hartford's religious institutions begins.

“The First Congregational Church of East Hartford was formally organized as the Third Ecclesiastical Society of Hartford on Dec. 29, 1699, over some objection from the older societies which were reluctant to lose the support of the thriving eastern community. However, it was not until May 13, 1702 that the first dismissals of congregants to the new church are recorded, and this is the official anniversary date of our First Congregational Church -- the name change commemorating the incorporation of East Hartford as a separate township in 1783.

“The first two meeting houses reared by the First Church stood on Old Meeting House Green at the intersection of Pitkin and Main Streets, and are memorialized by a stone and plaque erected by the Martha Pitkin Wolcott Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution in 1902. Around this Green stood some of the finest homes in Connecticut, notably those of Squire Pitkin (now moved to Guilford) and Rev. Eliaphalet Williams minister of the church for over 50 years. (The doorway and corner cupboard of this impressive home are preserved at the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, architectural evidence of the esteem in which clergy were held in colonial Connecticut).

“By 1835, however, the center of the community had moved north along Main Street and East Hartford's burgeoning population had rendered the 1740 second church building hopelessly crowded and inconvenient.

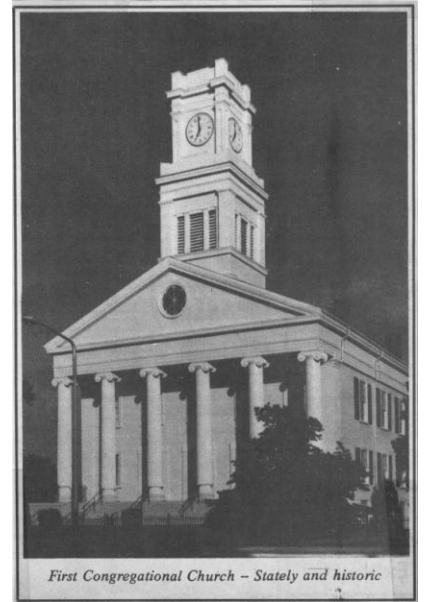
“Chauncey Shepard of New London was hired to design a new building in the finest Greek Revival style and the old church structure was carefully dismantled so that its timbers could be salvaged for the new building at the corner of Main Street and Hartford Avenue (now Connecticut Boulevard). The handsome edifice was dedicated with a great ceremony on Jan. 20, 1836; the price of this new structure was \$9,309, of which \$1,000 was provided by the town of East Hartford in exchange for the permanent use of the basement for town meetings and elections, a right which was exercised for 50 years until Wells Hall became the first Town Hall in 1886.

“The church structure itself was heavily damaged by fire in 1876, necessitating complete interior remodeling; in 1867 Sunday school facilities and a chapel were added, and, in 1888, the first addition was moved west allowing construction of a larger new chapel.

“Today, as in the 17th century, houses of worship define our community, and it seems fitting that the oldest church should stand proudly where the diverse elements of our town – the business community to the north on Main Street, the government offices to the south, and the houses and apartments in the meadows – come together.

“This is the first in a series of articles that the Historical Society of East Hartford is compiling and publishing to commemorate our town’s Bicentennial. Each religious institution has been requested to provide a short history and a photograph of its present building so that we can extract these articles. Most organizations have provided this information and we will be presenting them in roughly chronological order as the weeks go by.

“If your church or synagogue has not provided us with a history, send yours – with the photograph – to: Doris E.C. Suessman, 38 Forest Lane, East Hartford 06118.”



3rd Church photo is from the original East Hartford Gazette article of Wed, July 13, 1983.

ITEMS FROM THE FCC, CGN, MHS, and WICKHAM PARK REENACTMENT

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 if you are planning on coming or have any questions.

Bus Trip to Swan Point Cemetery in Providence Rhode Island Saturday July 14th Time: 8:30 am. & return about 7pm.

Bus to Swan Point, lunch and then over to North Burying Ground in Providence. Swan Point is a lovely rural cemetery and North Burial Ground is older with more mixed style and colonial stones. Visit <http://www3.providenceri.com/parksand-rec/north-burial-ground>

Bus pick up will be at the East Hartford South Senior Center where we have the annual Symposium. Email Ruthie Brown at shapbrown@cox.net for more information or call her at 860-643-5652

Manchester Historical Society (MHS) Civil War Talks

Are you interested in genealogy? Our new genealogy group welcomes Historical Society members to its next meeting -- May 8 at the History Center, 175 Pine Street. To read more info http://www.manchesterhistory.org/genealogy/MHS3_Genealogy_Home.html.

For more events link to <http://www.manchesterhistory.org>.

Reenactment at Wickham Park & Other Events Saturday Sept 29 from 9:30am-5pm & Sunday Sept 30 from 11:00am-3pm

Plans are moving forward and this looks to be the highlight of the New England reenactment event schedule. Again, CT has done more to commemorate the Civil War than any other New England state. For the September event, we have planned reenactment battles of Antietam's "Sunken Road" (aka "Bloody Lane"), and the Battle of Fredericksburg, Mayre's Heights (The Wall).

For Civil War events (lectures, displays, music, book discussions, etc) check the events link at www.ccsu.edu/civilwar. For those on FaceBook, join the group "Connecticut To Arms: 150th Commemoration" to get up-to-date listings of Civil War related events all over the State of CT.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION



Betty Squires, past head of the Society's Burnham Blacksmith Shop, remembers that this smaller (the wheel dia is about 6") hand pushed/powered lawn-mower was at one time used locally either by her family or by the Whitfords. It is an edge trimmer. Photos are by Bill Knose.

Its inventor, Arthur B. Kidder, applied for a patent Dec 12, 1913 and had it granted Dec. 15, 1914. He designed it to be an improved version of the type of lawn mower that had stationary and reciprocating cutter bars with blades that project forward; his version was a simple, strong, efficient mower which was "light, easily operated, and capable of being made in various sizes"¹.

Overall it is in fair to good condition. It still has traces of the red paint that once decorated it. Dusting it, oiling it, and a bit of cleaning would help improve its appearance and condition.

Interested in old mowers? Try <http://www.oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk/>.

CIVIL WAR SNAPSHOT, AUG, SEPT 1861 – JAN 1862²

- Aug 28-19, 1861 Union forces capture Forts Clark & Hatteras guarding Hatteras Inlet, NC, an important access for Confederate privateers into the Atlantic; 1st Federal base of operations on the Carolina coast
- Aug 30, 1861 Gen Fremont in MO issues proclamation confiscating Confederate property and declaring slaves of Confederates free; Lincoln orders Fremont to conform this emancipation to the Confiscation Act of Aug 6 - Lincoln thus calms nervous border state Unionists and retains the border states
- Sept 1, 1861 Mary Chase, Virginia freedwoman, starts 1st southern school for contrabands
- Sept 3, 1861 Confederate forces invade Kentucky; Union forces enter Kentucky to drive the southerners out; Kentucky's neutrality is lost; Lincoln refuses to move Union troops from the state
- Sept 11-15, 1861 Union forces defeat Gen Lee in the Cheat Mtn campaign in western Virginia; south's hold on western Virginia is weakened
- Sept 12-20, 1861 Confederate high point in Missouri is reached when Confederates take Lexington
- Sept 15, 1861 In Maryland Lincoln has arrested pro-southern legislators to prevent them from voting Maryland out of the Union; he suspends habeas corpus in Maryland
- Sept 16-17, 1861 Union forces take Ship Island between New Orleans and Mobile; it will become a base for the Gulf blockading squadron and the taking of New Orleans
- Sept 22, 1861 Militia killing of Navajos at a horserace in NM Territory sparks fighting with the Navajo; there is already fighting with the Apache; these conflicts will become known as the Apache & Navajo War
- Oct 9, 1861 In May the Connecticut legislature gave Gov. Buckingham permission to raise 10 regiments; more will be needed; Gov. Buckingham is given authority to enlist, to organize, and to equip volunteers as needed; \$2,000,000 in bonds are issued; 1861's total is now \$4,000,000;³ there are perhaps 7,000 men in service from this state of almost 500,000; the war is in its 7th month

¹ A. B. Kidder lawn-mower patent applied for Dec. 12, 1913, serial No. 806,133; U.S. patent 1,121,257 granted Dec. 15, 1914.

² 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.

³ The Military and Civil History of Connecticut During the War of 1861 – 1865, Croffut, W.A. & Morris, John M., published by Ledyard Bill, New York, 1868

- Oct 21, 1861 A slight demonstration at Balls Bluff to lure Confederates out of Leesburg, Virginia turns into a Union rout; Lincoln's good friend Col Edward Baker, Senator from Oregon, is killed
- Nov 1, 1861 Gen McClellan replaces Gen Scott as Commander-in-Chief of the union armies; he has formed the Army of the Potomac into a formidable fighting force of some 160,000 men; he rejects Gen Scott's Anaconda Plan, opts for a quick overland attack on Richmond to end the war; rejects emancipation
- Nov 6, 1861 Confederate voters elect Jefferson Davis president (he is no longer provisional president) and members of Congress (they will no longer be provisional members)
- Nov 8, 1861 On the high seas US Capt Wilkes, on his own authority, forces the captain of the British ship HMS Trent to hand over Confederates John Slidell, envoy to Great Britain, and James M Mason, envoy to France;⁴ Britain is outraged and war with Britain is now possible
- Nov 20, 1861 Gen Halleck, Gen Fremont's replacement in Missouri, negates Fremont's emancipation attempt; he will not allow slaves to enter the Union lines under his command
- Nov 28, 1861 The Confederacy accepts the secession ordinance of Missouri's secessionist legislators, admits Missouri into the Confederacy; the 12th star on the Confederate flag is Missouri's; however, these legislators are a 'government in exile' and Missouri will not leave the Union
- Dec 1, 1861 Secretary of War Cameron officially advocates for emancipation and military employment of slaves abandoned to Union forces; to hold the border states and because many northerners do not favor abolition this policy is rejected by Lincoln
- Dec 3, 1861 In his annual message to Congress Lincoln advocates supporting the colonization of contrabands and free blacks overseas; this is rejected by most blacks who feel America is their country
- Dec 10, 1861 Kentucky's 'provisional government' is admitted into the Confederacy⁵; theirs is the 13th star on the Confederate flag; however, Kentucky will not leave the Union
- Dec 14, 1861 Gen Sibley assumes command of the south's Trans-Mississippi Department; has been campaigning to remove Union forces from New Mexico and Arizona to open a way to California
- Dec 26, 1861 Secretary of State Seward averts possible war with Britain by releasing Confederate envoys Slidell and Mason (Nov 8, 1861); offers no apology
- Dec 26, 1861 In Indian territory south of Kansas Confederates and their Lower Creeks and other Native American allies kill and capture Unionist Upper Creeks and drive remnants into Kansas
- Jan 10, 1862 Union victory at Middle Creek, Kentucky helps protect the eastern half of Kentucky from invasion
- Jan 15, 1862 Stanton replaces Cameron as secretary of War; he will be able, strong, and energetic
- Jan 19, 1862 Union victory at Mill Springs, Kentucky; Tennessee is now vulnerable to a federal invasion
- Jan 30, 1862 Monitor slides into NY's East River; Union's first ironclad ship; built by Swedish inventor Ericsson

Historical Society of East Hartford

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Sept Newsletter Deadline: Aug 31, 2012



May Program

Date: Wednesday, May 16
Time: 7pm
Where: Raymond Library
Program: Barton & Walker

⁴ Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County, Connecticut, "Arthur P. Moore", J.H. Beers & Co., Chicago, 1901, pgs. 1452-1453.

Arthur P. Moore lived in East Hartford from 1860 until his death in 1911. He served in the 25th CT Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War and later became a prominent civil official in East Hartford. An interesting family story is related in his biography. "The children of this union (Arthur, his brothers and sisters) were all born in Glastonbury, and omitting further mention of Arthur P. for the present, it may be said, of the others, that Henry S. when but a lad of fourteen years went South, where he became a prosperous business man. At the breaking out of the Civil war he and his brother, Charles J., were doing an extensive mercantile trade at Jackson, Miss. Henry S. was then appointed a commissioner to England for the Confederate Government, became a very prominent man, married a granddaughter of Zachary Taylor, and passed the latter years of his life in Milledgeville, Ga., where his death took place in 1893. Charles J. Moore has also made a success at the South as a merchant, was a captain in the Confederate army, likewise married a granddaughter of Zachary Taylor, and is now a resident of Dallas, Texas." Was Henry associated in some way with Mason and/or Slidell? Or was he on another mission to England? Or?

⁴ Flower basket clipart is from Webweaver's free clipart at <http://www.webweaver.nu/clipart/flowers.shtml>