

# *Historical Society of East Hartford*

*Newsletter, January 2016*



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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Happy New Year to everyone! Hope the year 2016 is a prosperous and healthy one for you and yours. So far we have dodged a bullet with our winter weather results, but I believe the similarities with last year's forecast precludes my making any predictions for a mild season. As I recall, the first snowflakes fell early, then totally disappeared with unseasonably warm weather until February. Then the skies clouded up and snow fell every single weekend, sometimes twice in one week, and didn't stop for months. We had monster snowbanks to contend with and it was bitter cold. Something about El Nino. I hear it is coming back this year as well.

If some of you missed the November meeting at the newly re-opened Raymond Library last year, I hope you will find time to attend one of this year's meetings in the redesigned basement section of the library. It is actually very difficult to recognize and envision the old Lion's Club Room interior of the building in the meeting facility now located with its own rear entrance to the building. The renovation took care to recreate the same look for the enlargement on the exterior, but the interior is a delight to the eyes, and the new state-of-the-art conveniences for the use by the public have been well thought out. Our first meeting back in the building went well, both socially and historically, and the next day I was surprised with an offer from Susan Hansen, the Raymond Library's Director, to reinstate the same scheduled hours we have enjoyed previously (7pm to 9pm) to hold our regular membership meetings - a schedule we had enjoyed for the last 50 years. I accepted immediately and gratefully.

In September, I was invited to meet with Mayor Marcia Leclerc and the head of Public Works, Tim Bockus, about the future of the Selden Brewer House. The town has decided to discontinue the rental of that facility to the general public. The ability to rent it out for parties and showers is no longer offered; all references to its availability have been dropped from the Town Website. Instead, the downstairs will be made available to town groups such as the Town Beautification Committee, Fine Arts, and the Historical Society, etc. for their meetings and events, just as it has been for us since we moved in. A budget has been set aside by the town for some refurbishing of the first floor to enhance the building's interior appearances. I have been asked to deliberate on some of these decisions regarding window and wall treatments, etc. for a Victorian period house. All this is still in the discussion period, but the Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Departments are definitely involved and willing to get the job done, perhaps before the year's end. I'm looking forward to the results.

The Mayor would also like us to re-consider our participation in Holiday Fest. With a redecorated, restricted facility, some of the furniture and pictures that we have been collecting for the past fifty years could be brought downstairs to exhibit to the public, but not for public use. I'll be asking some of our members to consider being part of the annual town event and help demonstrate to the public how Christmas was celebrated in the 1870's while the Brewer family was still living. If we put our heads and hands together, we have some interesting history, plus archived items to share with the town. As the refurbishing of the Brewer House moves along, there will be more to discuss with membership.

Bette Daraskevich, HSEH President

## **JANUARY 20th PROGRAM FEATURES EXPERT IN THE TINSMITH TRADE**

The Historical Society is happy to have as its guest speaker Lance A. Kozikowski of Coventry who will present a program on the tinsmith trade that was established in America around the time of the Revolution. His lecture will cover the history of the industry and some other interesting things that you might not be aware of.

Lance practiced and fine-tuned his skills on tinsmithing and blacksmithing at the Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts for close to 30 years. He is an expert specializing in metalwork by creating historic reproductions,

doing restorations and repairs on tin, iron, copper and pewter originals. He will be bringing some of his tinware reproductions to exhibit. Besides his metal work, Lance has been the site manager of the Old New-Gate Prison in East Granby for the last 11 years.

Following a short 7:00pm business meeting, the Wednesday January 20th program will be held at the Raymond Library, 840 Main Street, East Hartford. Light refreshments will be served. There is plenty of free parking available in the Library back lot.

For any questions, please call Craig Johnson at 860-568-2884.

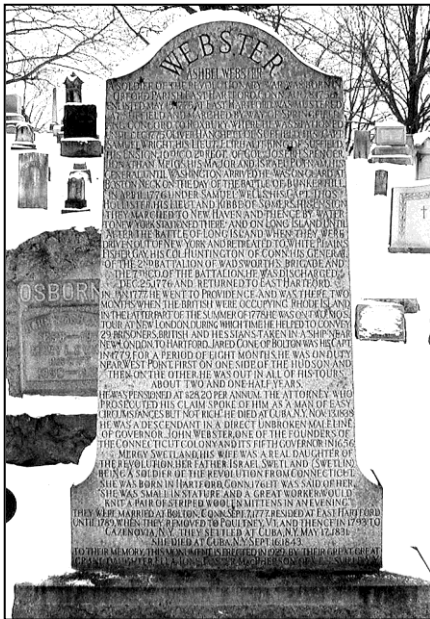
Craig Johnson, Vice President / Program Chair

## WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

We hope you enjoy working on this wordsearch puzzle. As you do you will learn something of a Revolutionary War soldier from East Hartford.

The puzzle and solution were generated by Puzzlemaker at DiscoveryEducation.com. Note that each letter in the puzzle can appear in only one word.

### Ashbel Webster, Revolutionary War Soldier, Remembered<sup>1,2</sup>



I found a picture of this interesting stone on the internet about 2 years ago while browsing for topics on 'East Hartford'. It had been put up by a Mr Brian Koberlein. Mr Koberlein lived in Cuba, New York for about a year and in his walks through the Cuba Cemetery would pass this stone. He found it and the story it told so interesting that he decided to put it on his web page of personal interests. Bill and I also found its story interesting and visited Cuba, NY this past November to see it. The stone is approximately 6' high. It was erected in 1929 by a descendant of Ashbel and Mercy Webster 'to their memory'. (It may not be a grave marker as Ashbel and others in his family have 'standard' ones in the old North Cuba Cemetery.) It tells a story of the birth, Revolutionary War service, marriage, dwelling places, and death of Ashbel Webster, who during the Revolution lived in East Hartford, and also something of his wife, Mercy

On June 7, 1832 Congress passed an act granting pensions for service in the Rev. War. Ashbel started his pension application in October of that year. (Nat. Arch. File: Webster, Ashbel, W 18313). His service record on this stone seems based on that application. There are differences however. Ashbel claimed he was born in Glastonbury, not East Hartford. Not all service

dates match his application. Perhaps some family research has been done? His application process took place some 55 years after the Revolution. What he put down was from his failing memory and the memories of his brother and others who served with them. He had no written records of his service, his birth, or marriage. However, 11½ months of his 2½ years' service were verified, at least 7 months, 14 days by the state of CT. It was for these he received his \$28.20/annum pension. The inscription on the stone reads:

<sup>1</sup> Photo by Bill Knose, Nov 2002

<sup>2</sup> This article is reprinted from the January 2003 HSEH newsletter. It tells of a Revolutionary War soldier from East Hartford, who lived here during the war but who not too many years after the war settled in New York. There he lived with his family into the 1830s, died and was buried. Except for the large, eye catching stone monument in his memory in the Cuba Cemetery, so unusual as to be put on the internet by a passerby, Ashbel would probably be largely forgotten here.

Ashbel lived here during the Revolution and we can wonder among other things if he and his wife Mercy were among those visiting French General Rochambeau's camps as the French army traveled through here to/from Yorktown.

ASHBEL WEBSTER

A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. WAS BORN IN ORFORD PARISH, EAST HARTFORD, CONN. AUG 8, 1756. ENLISTED MAY 15, 1775 AT EAST HARTFORD, WAS MUSTERED AT SUFFIELD AND MARCHED BY WAY OF SPRINGFIELD AND CONCORD TO ROXBURY WHERE HE WAS STATIONED UNTIL DEC. 1775. OLIVER HANCHETT OF SUFFIELD, HIS CAPT. SAMUEL WRIGHT, HIS LIEUT. ELIPHALET KING OF SUFFIELD HIS ENSIGN, 10TH CO. 2D REGT. OF COL. JOSEPH SPENCER, JONATHAN MEIGS, HIS MAJOR AND ISRAEL PUTNAM, HIS GENERAL, UNTIL WASHINGTON ARRIVED HE WAS ON GUARD AT BOSTON NECK ON THE DAY OF THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL IN APRIL, 1776. UNDER SAMUEL WELLS, HIS CAPT. THOS. HOLLISTER, HIS LIEUT. AND KIBBE OF SOMERS, HIS ENSIGN THEY MARCHED TO NEW HAVEN AND THENCE BY WATER TO NEW YORK STATIONED THERE AND ON LONG ISLAND UNTIL AFTER THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND WHEN THEY WERE DRIVEN OUT OF NEW YORK AND RETREATED TO WHITE PLAINS FISHER GAY, HIS COL. HUNTINGTON OF CONN. HIS GENERAL OF THE 2ND BATTALION OF WADSWORTH'S BRIGADE AND THE 7TH CO. OF THE BATTALION. HE WAS DISCHARGED. DEC. 25, 1776 AND RETURNED TO EAST HARTFORD. IN JAN, 1777, HE WENT TO PROVIDENCE AND WAS THERE TWO MONTHS WHEN THE BRITISH WERE OCCUPYING RHODE ISLAND IN THE LATTER PART OF THE SUMMER OF 1778, HE WAS ON TWO MOS. TOUR AT NEW LONDON, DURING WHICH TIME HE HELPED TO CONVEY 29 PRISONERS, BRITISH AND HESSIANS TAKEN IN A SHIP NEAR NEW LONDON, TO HARTFORD. JARED CONE OF BOLTON WAS HIS CAPT. IN 1779, FOR A PERIOD OF EIGHT MONTHS, HE WAS ON DUTY NEAR WEST POINT, FIRST ON ONE SIDE OF THE HUDSON AND THEN ON THE OTHER. HE WAS OUT IN ALL OF HIS TOURS ABOUT TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS. HE WAS PENSIONED AT \$28.20 PER ANNUM. THE ATTORNEY WHO PROSECUTED HIS CLAIM SPOKE OF HIM AS A "MAN OF EASY CIRCUMSTANCES BUT NOT RICH". HE DIED AT CUBA, N.Y. NOV. 13, 1838 HE WAS A DESCENDANT IN A DIRECT UNBROKEN MALE LINE OF GOVERNOR JOHN WEBSTER, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLONY AND ITS FIFTH GOVERNOR IN 1656 MERCY SWETLAND, HIS WIFE WAS A REAL DAUGHTER OF

THE REVOLUTION. HER FATHER, ISRAEL SWETLAND(SWETLIN)  
 BEING A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION FROM CONNECTICUT.  
 SHE WAS BORN IN HARTFORD, CONN. 1761. IT WAS SAID OF HER,  
 “SHE WAS SMALL IN STATURE AND A GREAT WORKER; WOULD  
 KNIIT A PAIR OF STRIPED WOOLEN MITTENS IN AN EVENING”.

THEY WERE MARRIED AT BOLTON, CONN. SEPT. 7, 1777. RESIDED AT EAST HARTFORD  
 UNTIL 1789, WHEN THEY REMOVED TO POULTNEY, VT. AND THENCE IN 1793 TO  
 CAZENOVIA, N.Y. THEY SETTLED AT CUBA, N.Y. MAY 17, 1831.

SHE DIED AT CUBA, N.Y. SEPT. 16, 1843.

TO THEIR MEMORY, THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED IN 1929 BY THEIR GREAT-GREAT  
 GRAND DAUGHTER, ELLA IONE FOSTER MACPHERSON OF WELLSVILLE, N.Y.

### Puzzle

V B N R D L H N E E F G N G E W S O N Z Q D E S C E N D A N T I Y W W  
 X W R W E W L R N B O O E L A R K E L U Y O O R C H Y K X E U O G H E  
 M K E I E T L I D O T R L N E K W R E S K T N E V I J M O J P Z O I S  
 Y V T I A R S D H G C A F N P L P C T C O L O N Y F O U N D E R V T T  
 G R Q K J N I B N R M D O O O U N G Z K P B D O N T H U A E Q F J E P  
 J L U C G E K I E A E S R N R E T K C Y L U I S M O O A R G A H O P O  
 E A Z B D V T O C W I K D O D D R N M A W N V I J Q H D P U E J H L I  
 E L S C X N U P B R L O N I F G P J A O R O X R D E F M O B D Z N A N  
 J X U V U O H N P E N E V U H T U A O M O T L P N I K V S T V W W I T  
 T B H H O E R N V T R O B P B V R L R U T G J H A G V N E U I Z E N T  
 A C N G R Y A N O H R L J H E Y M A V I Q N Y S L L G O Q E V V B S W  
 U E J S N I I H L P J D E A S I R Z H N S I I I S R M I Y L E P S A H  
 G U O A S Q A P R H G N W I T A I P D T D H I T I P P S V M N U T O K  
 U N B S G R P L F N R Y A T N L U A U K S S N I G F Z N R O B E E I D  
 W U E I T E N O T S Y R E T E M E C G G A A M R N I U E H J A X R L Q  
 C H E F U R A W Y R A N O I T U L O V E R W E B O F G P V Q K V U U G  
 T W O F C A W G H R S J N H K F D C H Y D N W Y L K C E N N O T S O B  
 M R G T W F U E X I V C G F T T I H X K G E Z N Q K B Z R G Z F A H Y  
 D M E R C Y S W E T L A N D R E I D L O S G L J O P C Q E O B P C S B  
 G F E M Y T E D H S I S U X F A F U D T U Z B N B U Z X M Z K C Y W B

ASHBELWEBSTER  
 BRITISHPRISONERS  
 CTCOLONYFOUNDER  
 DIEDCUBA  
 GENHUNTINGTON  
 GOVJOHNWEBSTER  
 MERCYSWETLAND  
 PENSION  
 ROXBURY  
 WHITEPLAINS

BOSTONNECK  
 BUNKERHILL  
 CUBANY  
 EASTHARTFORDCONN  
 GENPUTNAM  
 HESSIANPRISONERS  
 NEWLONDONTOHARTFORD  
 PROVIDENCE  
 SOLDIER  
 WOOLMITTENS

BRIANKOBERLEIN  
 CEMETERYSTONE  
 DESCENDANT  
 ELLAMACPHERSON  
 GENWASHINGTON  
 LONGISLAND  
 ORFORDPARISH  
 REVOLUTIONARYWAR  
 WESTPOINT

## Solution

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+ B + R + L + N + + + G N + E + S + N + + D E S C E N D A N T + + W W
+ + R + E + L + N + O O E L + R + E + + + + + R + + + + + + + G H E
+ + + I + T + I + O T R L N E + W + E + + + + E + + + + + + + O I S
Y + + + A + S D H G C A F N P L + C T C O L O N Y F O U N D E R V T T
+ R + + + N I B N R M D O O O U N + + + + + + O + + + + + + + J E P
+ + U + + E K I E A E S R N R E T + + + + + + S + + + + + + + O P O
+ + + B D + T O C W I K D O D D + N + + W N + I + + + + + + + H L I
+ + + C X N + P B R L O N I F + P + A O + O + R D + + + + + + + N A N
+ + U + U O H + P E N E V U + T + A O M + T + P N + + + + + + + W I T
+ B + H + E R N + T R O B + B + R L R + + G + H A + + N + + + + E N +
A + N + R Y A + O + R L + H + + M A + I + N + S L + + O + + + + B S +
+ E + S N I + H + P + + E + S I + + H + S I + I S + + I + + + + S + +
G + O A S + A + + + + + + I T A + + + T + H + T I + + S + + + + T + +
+ N B S + R + + + + + + + T N + + + + + S S + I G + + N + + + + E + +
+ U E + T E N O T S Y R E T E M E C + + + A + R N + + E + + + + R + +
C H + F + R A W Y R A N O I T U L O V E R W E B O + + P + + + + + + +
+ + O + + + + + + + S + + + + + + + + + + N + + L K C E N N O T S O B
+ R + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + E + + + + + + + + + + +
D M E R C Y S W E T L A N D R E I D L O S G + + + + + + + + + + + +
+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

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(Over, Down, Direction)

(Over, Down, Direction)

(Over, Down, Direction)

ASHBELWEBSTER (16, 13, NW)  
 BOSTONNECK (35, 17, W)  
 BRIANKOBERLEIN (2, 1, SE)  
 BRITISHPRISONERS (24, 16, N)  
 BUNKERHILL (15, 10, NW)  
 CEMETERYSTONE (18, 15, W)  
 CTCOLONYFOUNDER (18, 4, E)  
 CUBANY (1, 16, NE)  
 DESCENDANT (22, 1, E)  
 DIEDCUBA (8, 4, SW)

EASTHARTFORDCONN (23, 16, NW)  
 ELLAMACPHERSON (15, 1, SW)  
 GENHUNTINGTON (1, 13, NE)  
 GENPUTNAM (12, 1, SE)  
 GENWASHINGTON (22, 19, N)  
 GOVJOHNWEBSTER (33, 2, S)  
 HESSIANPRISONERS (2, 16, NE)  
 LONGISLAND (25, 17, N)  
 MERCYSWETLAND (2, 19, E)  
 NEWLONDONTOHARTFORD (19, 1, SW)

ORFORDPARISH (11, 2, SE)  
 PENSION (28, 16, N)  
 PROVIDENCE (10, 12, NE)  
 REVOLUTIONARYWAR (21, 16, W)  
 ROXBURY (7, 10, NW)  
 SOLDIER (21, 19, W)  
 WESTPOINT (35, 1, S)  
 WHITEPLAINS (34, 1, S)  
 WOOLMITTENS (21, 7, SW)



**KUDOS to Ray Tubbs**, President of FCC and HSEH member, for his well-received East Hartford historical tour/presentation during Holiday Fest 2015. Ruth Shapleigh-Brown commented that his trolley tours always seemed full. Indeed some had to be turned away. Everyone, from seniors who know something of East Hartford's history to the young who are just learning about this town, enjoyed being with him and listening to his stories. All look forward to joining him again. Photo is by Ruth Shapleigh-Brown.

## **Historical Society of East Hartford**

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**Membership:** 860-528-0716, redbarnrugs2@yahoo.com  
indiv \$15, 1 address \$20, student \$10,  
patron \$50

**Deadline Mar Newsletter – Feb 29, 2016**



## **January Program**

**Date:** Wed, Jan 20, 2016

**Time:** 7:00pm

**Program:** Lance Kozikowski –  
Tinsmith Trade

**Where:** Raymond Library

**Fee:** No cost

**Info:** Craig, 860-568-2884

**Image:**

<http://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/tinsmith.html>