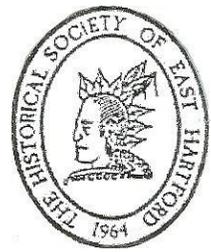


Historical Society of East Hartford

Newsletter, September 2016



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the past two years, it has been my privilege to serve as the president of the Historical Society of East Hartford. Since our Bylaws allow for a President to serve only two consecutive terms, I will be stepping back to allow others to serve. I am signing off, but not signing out - there are still many obligations and responsibilities to fulfill.

People often think that the president of a club gets to do whatever he or she likes – but I have learned over time that is definitely not the case! Certainly there are times when the buck has to stop somewhere and a decision has to be made, but our Historical Society is a club of members. Any changes or decisions, whether major or minor, have to meet our collective needs and consultation has to come first, before an agreement can be reached.

That is why the biggest thank you I have to make today is to the members of the Executive Board for their shared, co-operative interest in their responsibilities for the betterment of the Historical Society. And I thank them for their input year-round: at our meetings and during our activities. To run a club competently, there needs to be a core group of individuals who are willing to invest their time and energies to the purpose the club is dedicated to. One person cannot do it alone. For these past two years of this presidency, the support of your elected Officers and Directors and their commitment to the history of East Hartford, have made the job of representing you: the membership - a pleasure. Thanks for all your hard work, it was much appreciated!

Bette Daraskevich, HSEH President

ELECTIONS

Historical Society of East Hartford Executive Board 2016 – 2017

Nominations: Our Nominating Chair, Betty Russell, is still recuperating at home from a fall suffered this summer. Please send your regards to her at 118 Oak Street, 06118. In the meantime, the following officers and Directors have expressed their willingness to serve on the board positions mentioned below for the Historical Society's 2016 – 2017 business year in her absence.

President:	Craig Johnson
Vice President:	Bette Daraskevich
Recording/Corresponding Secretary:	Eileen Driscoll
Treasurer:	Joyce Yoo
Historian/Antiquarian:	Jeffrey Cummings
Director: 4 year:	Dan Russell
3 year:	Virginia Lynch
2 year:	Betty Russell
1 year:	Ruth Shapleigh-Brown

We are sincerely grateful to the current officers who have agreed to fulfill another two/four years of their offices. Each and every one of them had done an admirable job, above and beyond their required duties. We thank them all, as well as the Committee Chairs, for keeping our gem of a Society afloat.

Bette Daraskevich, President

ANNUAL DINNER

The **September 21, 2016** Historical Society Annual Meeting is again being held at the First Congregational Church, 837 Main Street in East Hartford. The same buffet style dinner catered by Matt Becker of Becker's Catering that graced our pallets last year is being served this year. Your reservations for the dinner must be received by

Friday, **September 16, 2016** using the required reservation form enclosed in the newsletter. The cost will again be \$20, the same for both members and guests of members. The menu is on the left. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. and dinner starts promptly at 6:30. For anyone wanting not to attend the dinner but would like to see the program, you can arrive after 7:30 p.m. There is plenty of free parking available in the back of the church. Call Craig Johnson at 860-568-2884 for needed information or to answer any questions.

Craig Johnson



Becker's Catering

HSEH Annual Dinner Meeting

September 21st 2016

First Congregational Church East Hartford

White and Dark Meat Roasted Turkey

Baked Ham

Roasted Baby New Potatoes

Green Beans with Shallot Butter

New England Apple Sausage Cranberry Stuffing

Tossed Salad with Italian Vinaigrette

Bottled Water, Tea, Coffee

Rolls with Butter

Pumpkin Pie with Fresh Whipped Cream

“YE OLDE LEBANON TOWNE MILITIA CO.” ANNUAL DINNER PROGRAM

Our after-dinner entertainment will feature “Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia” commanded by Major Kenneth Giella. The Lebanon Towne Militia was an eighteenth century irregular militia that defended the town of Lebanon against any possible threat from English invaders during the War of the American Revolution. Militia men from Lebanon, like many other towns across the state, responded to the Lexington Alarm in 1775 and men from Lebanon fought in every major battle in the Northern theatre of the Revolution. They wore no formal military uniform, only civilian clothing with maybe a hint of military look dating from

the French and Indian Wars. Each man was responsible to provide his own clothing and equipment on military campaigns. Today, the Militia is active at recreating the life of colonial militiamen and their families by engaging in battle re-enactments, encampments, parades and demonstrations. Some of today's members will talk to us on what is was like from both a soldier's and a civilian's perspective.

Craig Johnson

Scenes from Reenactments of Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia Co., shown with permission



SEPTEMBER 21, 2016 ANNUAL DINNER & PROGRAM

Reservation Must Be Received by September 16, 2016.

Tickets are \$20.00

NAME: _____ \$ _____

NAME: _____ \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

Make a check for the dinner reservation out to: **The Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc.**
Mail check to: **Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc., Po Box 380166, East Hartford, CT, 06138-0166**

MEMBERSHIP DUES: SEPTEMBER 1, 2016 – AUGUST 31, 2017

Memberships for the coming year are due now and can be paid by mailing them to the HSEH with this form or by paying them at the Annual Dinner.

Once again it is time to renew our memberships. The Historical Society depends on your membership to keep doing our community projects, sharing our rich history, and keeping our historical buildings open. If it's easier, mail this renewal in with your confirmation for the annual dinner. See you there.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____ EMAIL NEWSLETTER? Y___N___

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ \$15.00 / Individual, \$20.00/All at one address,
\$10.00 / Student, \$50.00/Patron

Make a check for membership out to: **The Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc. (HSEH)**
Mail check to: **Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc., Po Box 380166, East Hartford, CT, 06138-0166**

MARY GUMINIAK, December 10, 1925 - April 15, 2016, was an early member of this Historical Society. She was raised in Maine, lived the past 70 years in East Hartford, worked at the Travelers, and enjoyed summers with her family in Maine. She was known for the beautiful designs she painted on black tin ware. For years she was this Society's Corresponding Secretary and with her young granddaughter was in charge of stamping and mailing out the Society's newsletter.

The Historical Society extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mary's family and friends.

HUGUENOT HOUSE ENDS ANOTHER SEASON

The Huguenot House Museum at Martin Park was able to open again for 8 consecutive Sunday afternoons this summer season. Thanks to our loyal volunteers, we also opened on Connecticut Open House Day, Saturday, June 11th and hosted a private tour on June 16th for a group of tour guides from West Springfield's Storowton Village. To make the public aware of our July and August openings, we had great newspaper coverage from the Gazette, the Journal Inquirer and the Community section of the Hartford Courant. This brought readers to more information available on the Historical Society website.

During the off-season we will be looking at doing some roof repairs at the Huguenot House, where we had some damage to roof shingles and the chimney flashing during a spring wind and rain storm. Sadly, the cost of the repairs will far exceed the small amount we have in our reserve made available for such purposes. Donations, both private and corporate and a matching grant may be the only way to keep the house safe and dry from the elements so that we may open again next season.

Craig Johnson

THE BREWER TOBACCO PLANTATION

by Bette Daraskevich

In the early years of Connecticut's history, the newly formed Commonwealth of Connecticut of the 1630's acquired property by negotiating with the Indians who lived on the land – and then, granting those properties to those men who had given much service to the colony. These lands were referred to as 'plantations'; the original four being the towns of Wethersfield, Windsor, Hartford and Agawam, and later, large tracts of land to individuals. Most of those fortunate to have been given these grants then sold off smaller parcels of that land to other colonists. The original grantees had neither the time nor the inclination to clear these vast expanses of land for farming or grazing livestock. Those who petitioned for ownership were usually charged by the Commonwealth for their plots of land after the larger tracts were spoken for. The exception was, of course, our own wily Thomas Burnham who negotiated with the Indians directly for his land and wound up arguing with the Connecticut courts for his rights.

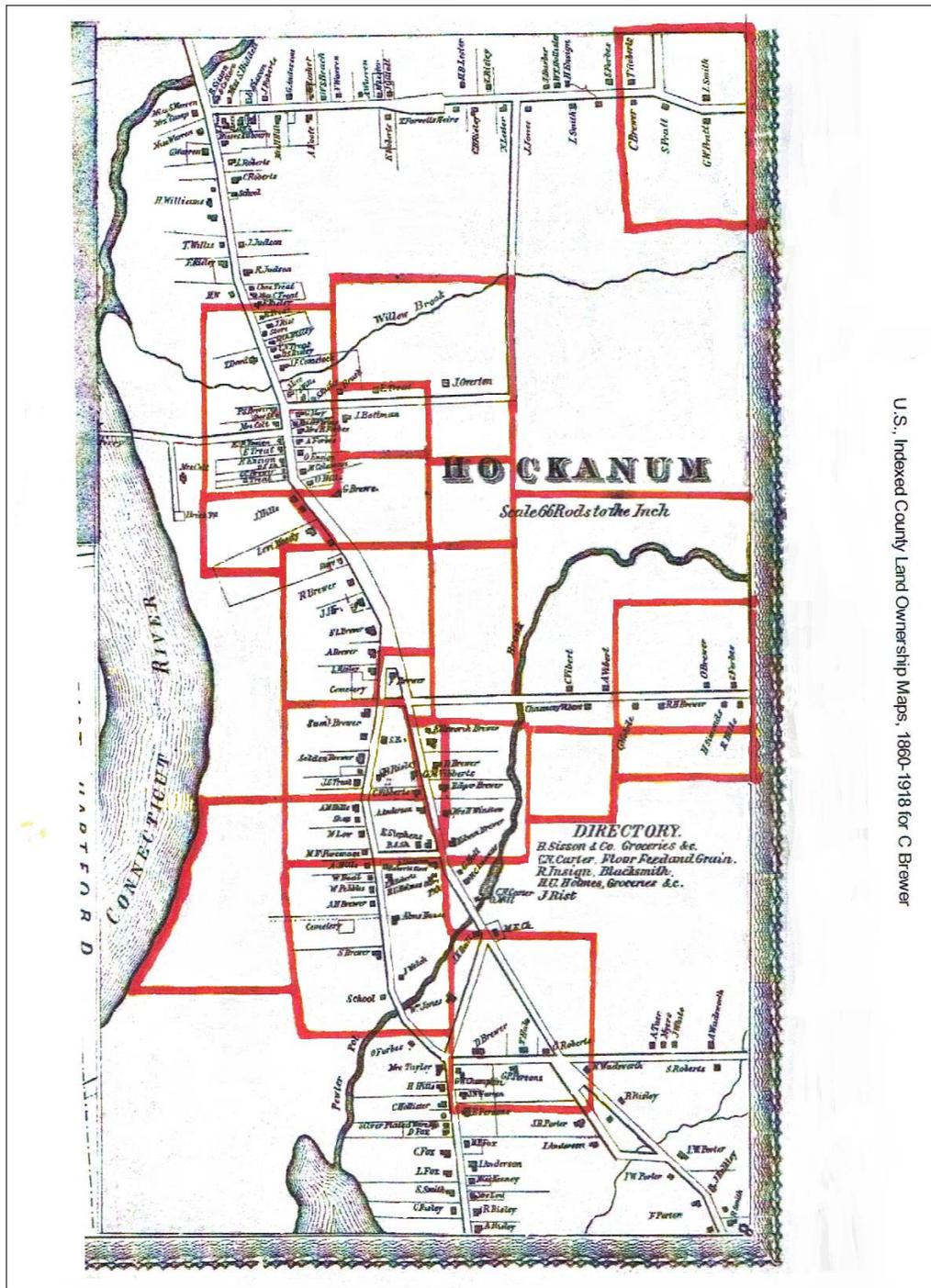
Samuel Brewer (1776-1847) became one of the largest landowners in the town of East Hartford with holdings totaling some 3,000 acres in Hartford and East Hartford. His land was acquired through years of careful trading on his part. Samuel Brewer was trading land for profit and what he did not sell off, he deeded to his family members. Many plots of land exchanged hands, being either bought or sold between the years 1817 and 1850. He amassed a sizeable 'plantation' in the Hockanum area located in the south of East Hartford. He was a single entrepreneur - buying and selling property with houses as well as land. His tax records in 1843 note the ownership of 7 houses, including his own.

During his lifetime, Samuel Brewer traded handmade cigars in New York for dry goods and rum sold in his store in East Hartford. He served three terms as town selectman, four terms as a state representative, and was one of five members of the building committee for the East Hartford Congregational Church erected at Church Corners in 1836.

The contents of his Last Will and Testament in 1847 go on for pages, consisting of bequeaths to his widow, Elizabeth Roberts..... "I leave Elizabeth the use of the following described estate as long as she shall remain my widow: in the brick dwelling house-the use of the bedroom, and the North front sitting room in common with the family that may reside in the house". (Samuel Brewer owned and lived in a large brick house only a short distance from the Selden Brewer House when it stood on the original property on High Street, it has since been demolished, but pictures of the dwelling survive) He also left various pieces of property to his living relatives; but the ownership of the brick dwelling house he left to his son, Samuel, plus the seven acres the house stood on. In all, the bequeaths of property to his legal heirs totaled over 260 acres of land that had remained in his hands before his death, and in his estate until his will was probated in 1849. There were a few additional properties that Samuel left to members of his family. However, his will only describes the bordering properties, without listing the dimensions or the acres involved.

In the mid 1860's, the Brewer lands extended from the Willow Brook before it crossed Main Street and ran south for over a mile down both sides of Main and High Streets where they cross over the Pewterpot Brook. Additionally, there were some interesting acquisitions of acreage on Silver Lane, another on Hills Street and one

down in the meadowlands near the Hartford Bridge (the Bulkeley) and the Ferry near the bottom of Pitkin Street. The 'Plantation' extended east up Brewer Street for more than a third of its length. The land was not granted to the Brewers for extraordinary service to the government. It was purchased legally using the proper purchasing authority over several years with money earned in honest trade.



U.S. Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918 for C. Brewer

To the left is a map from the US Indexed County Land Ownership Records; 1816 – 1918. From their records listed on Ancestry.com, I have taken the liberty of outlining the various properties owned by members of the East Hartford Brewer family in 1869, some 20 years after Samuel's death. In addition to these properties two aforementioned pieces of land are not recorded on this map, but appear on other maps of the same era in East Hartford.

The size of the properties and the amount of land that the 'Brewer Plantation' absorbed into its collective ownership of the Brewer family members astounds. The individual purchases of abutting land must have had a strategic plan useful to the family as a whole. The 'plantation' takes up almost two miles along the southern end of Main and High Streets. The three daughters of Samuel Brewer and his living brothers and sisters were recipients of Samuel's generosity as well. He left a small fortune to his sons and his second wife – the will was still being contested in 1911 by the surviving children of those mentioned in the will who received bequests but died before the will was settled. Samuel Brewer is buried in the Hockanum Cemetery on High

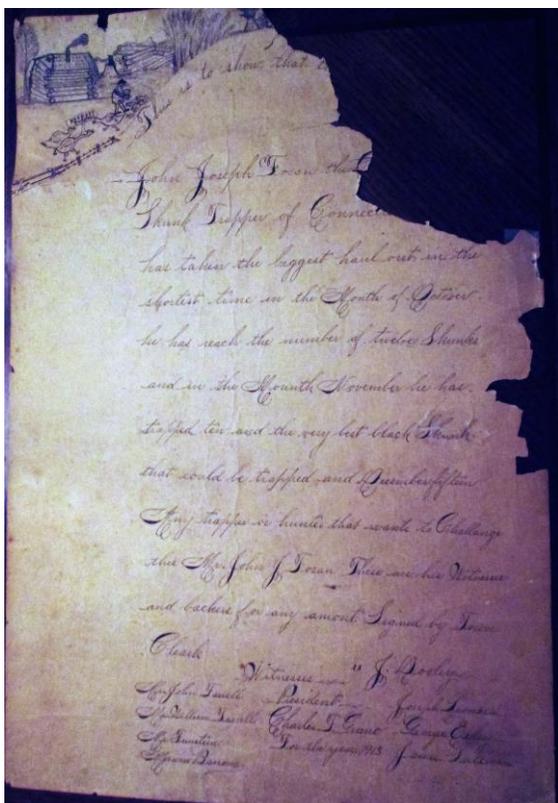
Street along with his first wife, Prudence Demming.

1913 - PROCLAMATION TO SHOW THAT SKUNK TRAPPER JOHN JOSEPH FORAN HAD CAUGHT THE MOST SKUNKS IN ONE FALL SEASON

This past May Ruth Shapleigh-Brown (Director) and Jeff Cummings (Antiquarian-Historian) were sorting some items found in the cellar of the Brewer House. Ruthie carefully unfolded and read this fragile Proclamation. She found it interesting and offered it as an unusual look back into old East Hartford.

(continued)

1913 – PROCLAMATION (Continued)



Transcription of original proclamation (left) by Ruth Shapleigh-Brown:

Top - This is to show that tr -----

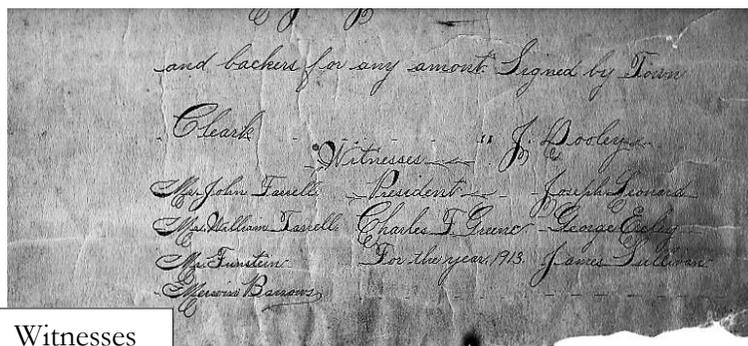
John Joseph Foran the -----
 Skunk Trapper of Connect –
 has taken the biggest haul out in the
 shortest time in the Month of October
 he has reach the number of twelve Skunks
 and in the Mounth November he has
 trapped ten and the very best black Skunk
 that could be trapped and December fifteen
 Any trapper or hunter that wants to Challenge
 this Mr. John J. Foran These are his Witnesses
 And backers for any amont. Signed by Town
 Clerk J. Dooley

Witnesses

Mr. John Farrell	President	Joseph Leonard
Mr. William Farrell	Charles F. Greene	George Ecley
Mr. Funstein	For the Year 1913	James Sullivan
Merwin Barrows		



Top of page



Witnesses

Submitted by Ruth Shapleigh-Brown

Historical Society of East Hartford

Mail: PO Box 380166, E Hartford, CT, 06138-0166

Phone: 860-528-0716

Email: hseh@hseh.org, webmaster@hseh.org

Web site: <http://www.hseh.org>

Membership: 860-290-1869, hseh@hseh.org

indiv \$15, 1 address \$20, student \$10,
 patron \$50

Deadline Nov Newsletter – Oct 31, 2016

Clip art: <http://images.finartamerica.com/images-medium-large/1-minuteman-granger.jpg>



Sept Dinner/Program

Date: Wed, Sept 21, 2016

Doors Open: 6:00pm

Dinner: 6:30pm

Meal: Becker's Catering

Program: "Ye Olde Lebanon
 Towne Militia Co

Where: 1st Cong Church,

Address: 837 Main St

Fee: Dinner & Program \$20

Fee: Program only, 7:30pm, no fee

Info: Craig, 860-568-2884