



# Lebanon Provisions

Vol. 4 No. 1

Fall  
2011

The Lebanon Historical Society Newsletter

## Calendar of Events

All of our programs are open to the public.

### **Sunday, Dec. 4** **Tree Lighting** **Open House** **6pm -9pm**

Mulled cider, molasses cookies and a holiday craft for the kids  
AND

### **Exhibit Preview** **"Long, Long Ago:"** **Lebanon's History** **through its Music** **1800-1940**

*Hold your week open for*

### **Children's Vacation**

### **Week Crafts**

### **Week of Dec. 26**

*Days & times to be announced*

### **Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012** **Preservation Workshop**

### **Furniture &**

### **Woodenware**

**10am - 12pm**

Pre-registration required

Members free, non-members \$2

Snow date: Jan. 28

### **Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012** **Preservation Workshop**

### **Ceramics & Glass**

**10am - 12pm**

Pre-registration required

Members free, non-members \$2

Snow date: Feb. 18

## The Geer Family Reed Organ

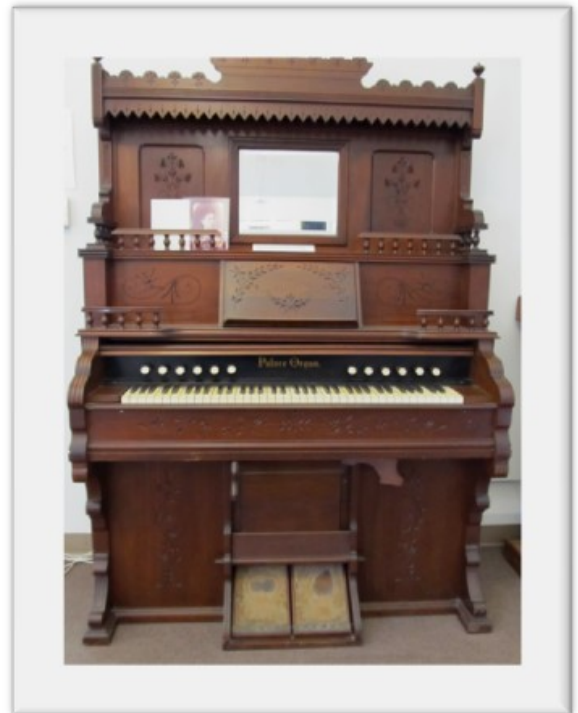
By Brian Bartizek

According to music historians, between 1850 and 1910 twice as many American families purchased reed or pump organs than purchased pianos. Reed organs were affordable and popular in churches and in private homes. The Lebanon Historical Society collection includes a wonderful Loring & Blake Palace Organ that was used in town by Julia Manning Geer (1856-1932).

This piece, which was donated by the Geer family led by long-time member Harold Geer, will be featured in our upcoming exhibit "Long, Long Ago:" *Lebanon's History through its Music 1800 to 1940*.

A reed organ is a keyboard instrument that operates via bellows that blow air past free-floating metal reeds. The bellows are manually operated with foot pump treadles, a knee operated lever, or hand-crank mechanism. Series of stops (pull knobs) determine which reeds are in use at one time. This reed organ belonged to Julia Elizabeth Manning, the daughter of Jabez and Mary (Robinson) Manning of Lebanon, who was born on August 18 1856. She married Joseph Nelson Geer (1847-1912) on March 18 1874.

Their children were Charles, Eunice, Elmer and Clarence. We do not have any information about Julia's training as an organist, but she, like so many



The Geer Organ, home again in Lebanon

children, probably took piano lessons. She may have acquired the organ when she was married or, perhaps, when the Geers bought their first house. Julia's organ is a typical example of an early Loring & Blake Palace organ with a walnut case, ivory keys and a knee-operated damper. Its known history is given in a letter from Boyd Geer to Harold as follows:

*Continued on page 8*

**The mission of the  
Lebanon Historical  
Society**

The mission of the Society is to preserve and to interpret all aspects of the history of Lebanon, Connecticut from its earliest inhabitants to the present day, with a special emphasis on the role of Lebanon in the American Revolution.

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## From the President

Ed Tollmann

Since my last President's report things have been hopping. The north wall of the Beaumont House has been finished. This completes our projects at the Beaumont. Electricity has been restored, the south wall was completely reconstructed and now the north wall. These were not "band-aid" fixes, they were completely reconstructed so that our moisture problem will not reappear. Kirsten Westbrook is doing a great job with improving things and keeping the house open to the public. A big thank-you to Dee Kruppa, John Kendall, Brian Bartizek and Howard Wayland for all their help over the years.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Evening at the Museum" was a great success. More than 130 folks turned out and a great time was had by all. I know I went home very pleased. Visiting with old friends, meeting new members, we even had a number of folks who had never been in the museum. I couldn't help but feel the warmth and camaraderie that was generated by all. We had planned to end the gathering at 8 o'clock but many people were still very comfortable and visiting when I locked up about 10:15. Another great event at the museum – my thanks to all who helped.

After many months of planning and preparation, on August 31 the Pastor's Library finally came to rest on its foundation on our grounds. I cannot describe how overwhelmed I was when the crane lowered the building on its foundation. This has been in the works for a long time. But like most of our projects it is completed and will be another permanent part of our museum grounds.

A committee has been formed to come up with ideas to best utilize the building to conform to our mission. As most of you know the Fortin Foundation donated \$25,000 to move and restore the library. Joe Fortin was very impressed during a tour of the library with our progress and committed another \$5,000 to help restore the interior. This project would still be in the planning stages without the generosity of the Fortin family.

Our Lebanon Fair display is up and looks great. Thanks to Gracie Sayles and Marty Kendall.

Our annual Antiques Show was not the success it usually is.

We just can't control Mother Nature. The forecast was far from promising Friday, causing some dealers to drop out. It also affected the gate. The buyers that did show up were serious and folks could be seen carrying items that had been purchased. Dealers I talked with were pleased with how well they did. My thanks to all who helped.

Our Annual Appeal will be underway soon. Mary Lou Beckwith and I will be meeting to discuss how we will move forward this year. My hope is to surpass last year's total.

In closing, I want to again thank our Board members and staff for all the hard work that was put into these projects. I have to say that in the history of LHS there has never been a better Board of Directors and staff. The give and take, the ease of working together and the willingness to help is what makes it great. Thanks to our volunteers the museum grounds have never looked better. Stop by with your lunch some day and enjoy it on the patio!



## Director's Message

Donna Baron

School programs have long been a tradition at the Lebanon Historical Society. Programs began at the Beaumont House shortly after it was moved from Village Hill. Our files include descriptions of volunteers like Claire Krause teaching about butter making and other agricultural skills shortly after the building was completed in 1998. In more recent years, we have collaborated with the other heritage sites around the Green to offer a program based on Lebanon's Revolutionary War history. Over the years, the Connecticut Humanities Council has provided funding for school programs and teacher training including a 2006 teacher institute offered by our Society and the Hale Homestead in Coventry.

This year Humanities Council funds have allowed us to hire a part-time museum education coordinator. In September, Laurie Pasteryak joined us as the newest member of our staff. Lisbon native and NFA graduate, Laurie holds BAs from UCONN in Anthropology and History and an MA in Museum Education from Tufts University. She also brings ten years experience in museum education, public history and archaeology to her new job in Lebanon.

The challenge we have given Laurie is to help us offer the best, most classroom friendly program we can so that we attract more school groups to Lebanon. She will focus on fulfilling local, state and federal curriculum standards as applied in local school systems. Laurie will be working closely with the other museums around the Green to improve our field trip program and to expand outreach into classrooms.

Laurie's first priority has been visiting all the historic sites in town and reviewing all the files on what we have done before. Soon she will start contacting schools to talk with teachers and administrators. Our goal is to increase the number of schools who book our programs in the 2012-13 school year. Once we have secured funding for another year, Laurie will also be setting up a training program for museum education volunteers. If you are interested in working on this project, you can contact Laurie at 860-642-6579

or email her at [lpasteryak@historyofLebanon.org](mailto:lpasteryak@historyofLebanon.org).



Laurie Pasteryak



### **Museum education on the map and on the road, keeping us busy in November**

Home school book clubs at LHS – Nov. 8 & 15

Colchester 7<sup>th</sup> graders – 120 students on Nov. 9

School programs at LHS presented in a panel discussion at NEMA ( New England Museum Association) conference in Hartford on Nov. 16

Teaching American History

teachers from EastConn visit LHS on Nov. 17

**Welcome**  
to our  
newest members

**Family**  
**Mark & Diane**  
**Connors**  
of  
**Columbia**

### **History Trivia Answer:**

**It was not until  
1980  
with a population  
of 4,762  
that Lebanon's  
population  
surpassed that  
of 1790.**

### **Contact Us:**

The Lebanon  
Historical Society  
856 Trumbull Hwy  
P.O. Box 151  
Lebanon, CT 06249

**860-642-6579**

[museum@  
historyoflebanon.org](mailto:museum@historyoflebanon.org)

[www.  
historyoflebanon.org](http://www.historyoflebanon.org)

### **Museum Hours:**

Wed. thru Sat.  
12pm to 4pm

### **Library & Research Center**

Wed. and Sat. only  
12pm to 4pm



## A special message to Antiques Show Volunteers

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to extend a rainy day (averted) thank you to the many veteran volunteers and to our new volunteers "welcome aboard." This vital volunteer support makes our annual Antiques Show happen and come together. We hope to see you again next year.

Keith LaPorte, Chair  
Community Events  
Committee



You can always  
visit our website  
**www.  
historyoflebanon.org**  
to see a list of our  
current events  
and programs

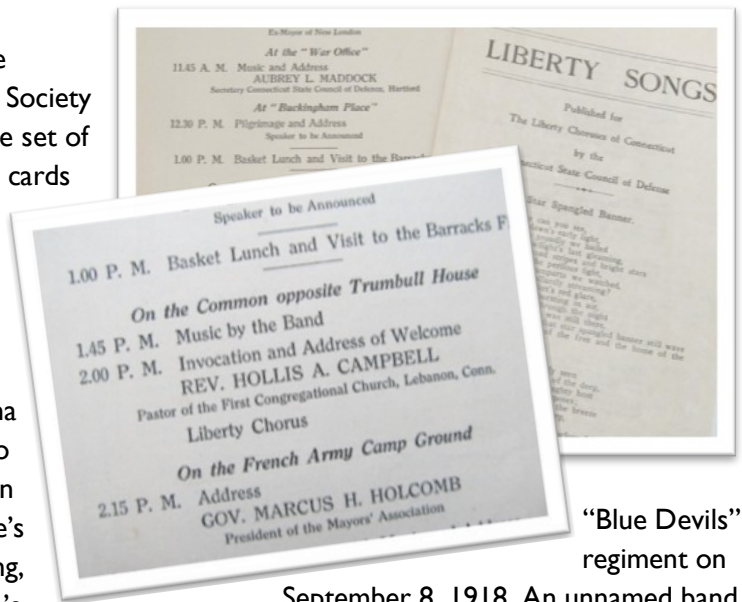
## One thing leads to another...

By Alicia Wayland

Some years ago the Lebanon Historical Society received a complete set of marching band lyre cards for a tune titled "The Lebanon March," but very little identifying information. Now, LHS director Donna Baron would like to use the lyre cards in the new exhibit she's planning titled "Long, Long Ago: Lebanon's History through Music 1800-1940." Inspired by May Taylor's large sheet music collection in the LHS archives, the exhibit and associated programs, with grant support from the Connecticut Humanities Council, will explore the many ways music touched the lives of Lebanon residents.

But what is the connection of "The Lebanon March" to our town? The lyre cards are undated but list the composer as Charles W. Crankshaw, the arranger as Fredric Watson, and the publisher as A. K. De Lemos & Co., Newark, New Jersey. At a meeting I attended, Donna mentioned she thought the music may have been part of that vast outpouring of patriotic songs composed during World War I after the U.S. entered the war on April 6, 1917. I wondered if there was a commemorative event held in town around that time and perhaps a printed program would give the names of musical selections.

The closest event to 1917 was a visit to Lebanon by Connecticut Governor Marcus H. Holcomb with the Rev G. B. Cabanel, chaplain to the French



"Blue Devils"  
regiment on

September 8, 1918. An unnamed band provided music five different times throughout the day-long program but individual pieces were not named. Also listed as providing music was the Liberty Chorus. Inside the day's program was a separate folded song sheet with the words to many patriotic songs printed on the pages. It was titled "Liberty Songs, published for The Liberty Choruses of Connecticut by the Connecticut State Council of Defense." Aha. That was a new one. Never having heard of this, I started searching the Web.

Aha, again. Google books turned up the *Report of the Connecticut State Council of Defense December 1918*," published in 1919. On pages 40-42 is the report of the Division of Liberty Choruses which details how Connecticut originated the idea of Liberty Choruses in response to declining attendance at war rallies. From the first performance on October 17, 1917, the idea of local Liberty Choruses rapidly spread throughout the state. A standard song book was adopted with 40,000 copies sold, and 215,000 song sheets were

*Continued on page 9*

# Lydia Hartig, Home Missionary to Goshen

By Donna Baron

The Goshen Congregational Church proudly claims a list of firsts: from the first church organ in Lebanon to the first Lebanon church with a web site. It is also likely that the Goshen Society can claim to have had the first woman as a regular preacher in its pulpit. In 1921, having no minister, the congregants asked the Congregational Home Missionary Society for help. The Home Missionary Society had been founded in 1826 as the American Home Missionary Society by



Goshen Congregational Church

an association of Presbyterians and members of the Dutch Reform Church. By 1861 all the support for this Society came from Congregational churches and in 1893 the organization changed its name to reflect this, becoming the Congregational Home Missionary Society. Its purposes were to found Christian churches in the west and to "support feeble churches" throughout the country.

When the Missionary Society replied to Goshen, they sent Lydia Hartig (born 1864/5 in Alsace Lorraine, France) to lead the failing church. Lydia apparently immigrated to the United States in 1872 with her older sister Marie. According to the 1920 census Lydia became a naturalized citizen in 1918. Before becoming a missionary, Miss Hartig attended the Training School for Christian Workers that Dwight Lyman Moody had established in Northfield, MA

in 1879. She worked in Vermont before moving to Connecticut.

By 1911, she was recognized by the *American Missionary*, journal of the American Missionary Association as "robust, refined, spiritual, sane, and social, she loves humanity and humanity reciprocates. The aged renew their strength in the cheer and comfort of her presence. The housewife, burdened with domestic duties, receives from her the sympathy of one who knows. Men find her a match in wit and wisdom. Youth feel her to be a friend, and children know that to have a good time is to be with her."

While serving in West Woodstock in 1917, Lydia wrote "Children of the Home Missionary Parish" which was published in the February edition of *The American Missionary*. In this essay she anonymously recalled some of the children to whom she had ministered and proudly recounted how well they had done in life.

The 1920 census shows Lydia, then 55 years old and single, in Killingworth, CT working for the state as a home missionary. From 1921 to 1926 she served at the Goshen Congregational Church. In 1930 she was serving at one of the Congregational churches in Voluntown.

As yet no record of her work in Lebanon has been found and there is no known photograph. She may have been the Lydia Hartig who died in 1952 in Middlesex County, CT. Perhaps her life's work was best summarized in the 1911 article about her. "She can diagnose the case of a dwindling or decadent rural church with exactness and with statesmanship grasp the situation in a country community. Many a rural church and remote hamlet in Vermont and Connecticut rise up and call her blessed."

We would like to acknowledge the following people who have chosen to support us by dedicating contributions to a particular fund.

Alicia & Howard Wayland  
& Jane Cranick  
*Thank you for supporting  
our newsletter*

Rob Slate  
*Thank you for supporting  
our genealogy and  
research library*

Fortin Foundation  
*Thank you for supporting the  
relocation of the  
Buckingham Pastor's  
Library*

*Thank you to everyone who  
has supported our exhibits  
by the loan of items  
to enhance our displays.*

*Thank you to everyone who  
has supported our mission  
by the donation of items  
to add to our collection.*

*Thank you to everyone who  
has donated their time and  
talents to do whatever needs  
to be done to make our  
programs and events  
successful.*

*Thank you to our newest  
volunteers and to those  
that we count on  
each and  
every year!*

## A Good Read

### ***The Last Founding Father: James Monroe and a Nation's Call to Greatness***

By Harlow Giles Unger  
(De Capo Press, 2009)

Eighteen-year-old James Monroe (1758-1831), perhaps the youngest of the founding fathers, nearly died from wounds in heroic action at the battle of Trenton in December 1776 but recovered and served another four years before returning to college in 1780.

In 1782 he was elected to the Virginia legislature, and subsequently to the Confederation Congress, the U.S. Senate and as governor of Virginia. In 1803 he was appointed minister to France and Spain and negotiated the Louisiana Purchase. During Madison's presidency he served as secretary of state and as secretary of war during the War of 1812. He was elected president in 1816, beginning the long "Era of Good Feelings" during his two terms and achieving international diplomatic success with the establishment of the "Monroe Doctrine." He died on July 4, 1831.

This is a very readable and informative biography if one overlooks the "Monroe could do no wrong" bias of the author. Available at the Jonathan Trumbull Library.

## Researching Lebanon's Civil War Veterans

By Suzanne Swartz

Lebanon is known for its importance during the American Revolution, yet the town's Civil War history also carries significance. Close to two hundred men from Lebanon served for the Union.

Uncovering biographical information about Lebanon's Civil War veterans for the upcoming museum exhibit began with resources immediately available at the Lebanon Historical Society. Census records, cemetery records, and marriage records were all on-hand to begin adding to research begun by Lindy Brunkhorst-Olewine. I also turned to the web to find records of

Connecticut regiments. These proved critical in determining the course of soldiers' military service.

After making the most of those resources, I had compiled information about several veterans' time in Lebanon and in the military.

But that was only part of the puzzle. Many of the men did not appear in Lebanon's census records before or after the war. For some, the reason for not appearing after 1860 was clear: military information indicated that they had died during the war. But dozens of others were still a mystery, and so

Donna Baron directed me to the national census records online. Researching in that database was like opening a treasure chest: large quantities of the information I obtained about the veterans' lives came from nationwide census records from 1860 to 1920. Some had relocated as far away as Missouri or Michigan, and some had lived down the road from Lebanon in neighboring towns.

The sources revealed highly specific information about several of the soldiers, and some stories proved particularly intriguing:

Isaac Avery grew up in Lebanon and lived there most of his life. In March of 1862, shortly before joining the 21<sup>st</sup> Connecticut Volunteer Infantry as a corporal, he married Eliza Williams, a Lebanon native. Wounded in 1864 in Virginia, one military record had listed him as killed in action. Fortunately for Avery, this was mistaken information! As proven by later census records, he returned to Lebanon after the war, where he and his wife had six children. Avery, a farmer, also served in the General Assembly in 1891.

The four Lombard brothers, Marcena, Orlenzo, Orvando, and Joseph, all grew up in Lebanon and all served in Connecticut regiments.

Marcena was wounded

during the war, but survived

and later moved to Colchester. Orlenzo lived in Lebanon with his family after



Shalk Monument

*Continued on page 10*



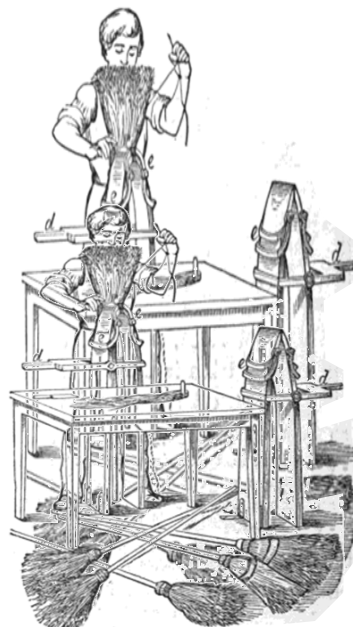
# A New Broom Sweeps Clean

By Jacy Worth

I have had an interest in our little Broom Shop located on the grounds of the Historical Society for several years. I first became involved in the LHS as a member of the Curbside Appeal Committee. The goal of the committee was to come up with appealing ways to entice visitors to the museum. As a child my interest in history was fueled as I visited places with living historical exhibits such as Old Sturbridge Village and Mystic Seaport. These places brought history to life for me. It became a tangible thing and consequently I was able to absorb the lessons from the past that were represented at these places. The idea to bring our Broom Shop to life began as I sat on that committee.

Our little red Broom Shop was built in 1902 by Eugene Lyman. Its first location was at the north end of the Green at the intersection of Trumbull and Beaumont Highways. It was situated across from school number 5. Mr. Lyman, as described by Henry Aspinall, in his recollections as a school boy, was 'a man of medium disposition who did not ignore the school children. He was neither jovial nor a grouch.' He would keep a box of penny candy for them by the door and would occasionally employ a school-aged boy to help in the shop compensating him with a penny an hour or the equivalent of candy for their work. The shop had a cast iron stove for warmth but no source of water or lighting. The equipment in the building consisted of a fodder chopper, broom vice, binder and a wire

winder. I refer you to an informative booklet in our museum library, 'Buy a Broom Besom', by William Henry Young. It describes in detail the many tools used



A Broom Vice holds the broom as the craftsperson sews

in the making of a variety of brooms past and present. The raw materials used were broomsticks and broom corn. Mr. Lyman crafted several styles of flat brooms. One of his brooms, made in 1904, is on display in our museum. The broom corn was grown by local farmers from the seed provided by Mr. Lyman. It could take 60 plants to create one broom. His brooms were known for their quality and were used in local farmhouses and barns.

A farm may use a dozen brooms a year, wearing out but never coming apart. We have a list of prices and styles:

Whisk broom	15cents
Light house broom	20cents
Heavy house broom	25 cents
Regular barn broom	30 cents
Sturdy barn broom	35 cents

I couldn't find information regarding the number of brooms that Mr. Lyman would produce annually. However, I did discover that by about 1830 there were enough one-or two-man broom shops in the U.S. that 60,000 brooms were being produced in a year. Mr. Lyman operated the shop until 1918 when he retired at the age of eighty. As times changed the shop was no longer used for broom making and was converted to a chicken

*Continued on page 11*

## Highlights of broom making history

**3000-30BC:** Ancient Egyptian frescoes depict priests using brooms during funeral rites.

**12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries:** Medieval "besoms" (German for brooms) were used to sweep dirt floors in castles and farm houses.

**16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries:** Willow and birch splint brooms were popular in Europe and America. Heather brooms were popular in the British Isles.

**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries:** Local materials including grasses were used to make brooms in North America. One grass, *Sorghum vulgare* (broom corn) was introduced, probably from North Africa. Tradition associates broom-corn broom making with southern black slaves.

**1790-1820:** Shaker Theodore Bates of Watervliet, NY invented the modern flat broom, starting a major Shaker community industry.

**1820-1994:** Led by the Shakers, the United States became a major broom exporter. English broom makers (broom squires) arranged to embargo American brooms from the

*Continued on page 11*

Please make some time to stop by and listen to some of the many oral histories we have in our collection.

Over the past year or so we have had the opportunity to be involved with the Library of Congress project to gather local WWII veterans and video tape their recollections as WWII soldiers.

These tapes are treasures! They provide an insight that is hard to get from reading a book.

You are welcome to sit in a comfortable chair and watch a DVD or two. I'm sure you'll consider it time well spent!

### Walkway

Beautiful granite replacement bricks are available for cost. If you have purchased a brick in the past and have found it is worn and hard to read, we can install a new one for you for a nominal fee.

If you are interested let us know and we'll mail a new form out to you.

THE  
WESTBROOK  
FAMILY 2011

Sample of the new brick

## Geer Family Reed Organ

*continued from page 1*

July 17, 2006

Dear Harold,

*You have asked me to help establish provenance for the organ that you are donating to the Lebanon Historical Society Museum. I agree with my sister-in-law, Janette Geer, that it originally belonged to our grandmother, Julie Manning Geer.*

*I have also concluded, after consulting with my brother-in-law, John Champe, that it was brought to my parents' home in Lebanon by my father, Clarence Geer, and brother, David Geer, in the 1960s. They went to Cranston, Rhode Island, to pick it up following the death of our aunt, Elsie Geer Stevens. I can only assume that since both our Aunt Elsie and Cousin Ruth played the organ that at some point Grandmother Geer had given it to them.*

*The organ remained at my parents' home until after both of them passed away and it was inherited by my sister Janice Geer Champe. In the late 1980s it was agreed between Janice and David that he should have it to eventually give to his daughter Cheryl who plays the piano. David then took it to his home in Palermo, New York, where it has remained until you went to get it at the suggestion of Janette. Cheryl was not interested in it. I hope that this information will be helpful to you in reconstructing the history of Grandmother Geer's organ. It is good to know that it is now in a place where it will be preserved.*

Sincerely,  
Boyd

Don't be deceived by the grand model name 'Palace'. The organ was built for

use in a Victorian parlor. The case is an example of Eastlake Style furniture, which takes its name from Charles Eastlake. He was an English architect whose book *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details* was first published in the U.S. in 1872.

In the late 1870s and 1880s it was a dominate furniture design.

During this time, the reed organ was far more popular than the piano for use in a home. There are over 600 recorded

organ companies in the U.S. Connecticut had at least

42 and Massachusetts had over 100.

Loring & Blake incorporated in 1868 at Worcester. J.W. Loring and Rufus W. Blake served apprenticeships at the Taylor and Farley Organ Company of New York. In 1892 the organ business was succeeded by J. W. Loring & Son. By that time the piano was overtaking the organ in public favor.

The organ's popularity was one of the driving forces in the explosion of sheet music during the second half of the 19th century. Many American families played music and sang at home. Sheet music could be bought for 25 cents or less. The Library of Congress has a collection of 47,000 pieces submitted for copyright during the period 1870-1885.

Please visit our exhibit "Long, Long Ago." Lebanon's History through its Music 1800-1940 when it opens later this year.



Julia Manning Geer



## One thing leads to another

*Continued from page 4*

distributed. So there was the explanation of the song sheet inserted in the September 1918 Lebanon program.

The success of the Connecticut plan led to national recognition. In December of 1917, the Council of National Defense recommended its extension in other parts of the country, and many states mandated the establishment of Liberty Choruses.

What also turned up in that report was a list of the towns and organizations which had Liberty Choruses, with the names of the directors or chairmen (Appendix 15, pp. 177-178). Aha, again. Lebanon's director was listed as C. C. King, a name that had previously appeared only once

before, as the 1st B ♭ cornet player in an article about a Lebanon band that appeared in the August 1888 edition of *Trumpet Notes*. Contacts with King family descendants still living in Lebanon identified C. C. King as Clifford Cross King and we learned that his cornet is a treasured family heirloom.

We are still searching for a specific connection of "The Lebanon March" to our town. But, in the meantime, the use of community singing during World War I to encourage patriotism and "assist the work of Americanization" of the large immigrant population will add another story to the forthcoming music in Lebanon exhibit.

*Another great success!*



*"An Evening at the Museum"*



## Exhibit News

### Lebanon Lions Club Fair

Is up in our meeting room and is filled with trophies, ribbons and pictures from the scrapbooks of local Lions Club members and fair-goers alike.

The Lebanon fair started in 1960 and was held on the Lebanon green for several years before moving to its current location on the Lions Club fairgrounds on of Mack Road.

Sunday, December 4  
Preview Opening



**Lebanon's  
History through  
its Music  
1800-1940**

Introducing  
RevolutionaryCT.com

Revolutionary **CT** .com

The Lebanon Historical Society has joined other eastern Connecticut

Revolutionary War heritage sites in a new marketing initiative.

Supported by funds from the Connecticut Humanities Council "RevolutionaryCT.com" will be creating and promoting a thematic letterboxing trail linking all our sites.

Look for more information in the spring.

### Correction

In the last issue of Provisions we incorrectly identified the mile markers as lining the route from Norwich to Windham rather than the correct route from Norwich to Hartford.



## Civil War Veterans

Continued from page 6

the war, and toward the end of his life resided at the Fitch Home for Soldiers in Darien, CT. Orvando also returned to Lebanon, where he lived with his sister and her husband. Sadly, not all of the brothers survived the war. Available information indicates that Joseph was killed at Newbern, North Carolina, on March 14, 1862. The Lombards are an example of how deeply families were affected by the war.

Frederick Schalk was born in Germany but spent time in Lebanon as a young adult, and married a local woman in 1862. He joined the 14th Connecticut

Volunteer Infantry as a private, and was eventually promoted to first lieutenant. Charles Page, author of the *History of the Fourteenth Regiment*, described him as "vigorous," "energetic," "cheerful," and "courageous." He was severely wounded and died in Fredericksburg on May 21, 1864. Schalk is buried in Lebanon's Liberty Hill Cemetery.

Conducting detective work on nearly two hundred individuals was both fascinating and challenging. Uncovering each piece of information was rewarding, and I hope that this research makes a valuable contribution to the Civil War exhibit.

The  
Pastor's Library  
on the move and now at  
its new home at the Lebanon  
Historical Society Museum.  
An opening celebration  
is planned  
for the spring!



# Brooms

*Continued from page 7*

house and for storage. In 1974 John McGee donated the building to the Lebanon Historical Society. It was restored by the Society in 1975 with a cutter and a binder, which are typical of the original tools used. It was relocated in 1990 to the Jonathan Trumbull Jr. house, then again in 2000 to its present location at the museum.

As I mentioned earlier, my wish is to revive this broom shop and get it back into some sort of working order. In order to do so, I've had to research broom making and its origins. A loftier task than I had first imagined! I jumped right in this summer as Donna Baron kindly ordered broom corn seed and I planted 100 in the raised beds at the museum. While I hoped that the broom corn would grow, I began to delve into the process of harvesting and constructing broom corn brooms. Broom corn is not actually a corn but a sorghum, it has no ears and it grows 8-12 feet in height. Some people even use it in gardens as an ornamental grass, apparently the plants are distasteful to deer! The brushes or tassels at the top are what is harvested. Once matured the stalks are bent horizontally; this is called 'tabling' and allows the tassel to be pulled straight by the weight of the seed and cut more easily. Remarkably, our broom corn grew and my husband and I tabled the plants, then after a week or so harvested it. We are currently in the process of curing the heads in the shop itself. Our next step will be to remove the seeds, although some ornamental brooms or brushes are left with seeds on and the brooms made in this form are considered good luck charms. The seeds can be

removed by hand with a curry-comb or in larger operations by a barrel seeder. Once the heads are dry in a commercial operation they would be sorted into grades for making the inside and outer layers of the brooms. My goal at this point will be to fashion a sort of round broom by plaiting and sewing the tassels to a handle, the type you would see

being made at Old Sturbridge Village. I believe this is a good place for an inexperienced broom maker to begin until I become more



Dwarf Broom Corn

familiar with the tools we have available in the broom shop and museum. There is an example of a round broom in the LHS collection. The round broom was commonly used in America prior to

the invention of the flat broom in 1797. There are many superstitions related to brooms. I can only assume it has to do with our daily relationship with them as important tools in our homes over the centuries. The rhythm of sweeping in itself is a soothing one. The sound it makes is pleasant and the end result of a clean floor satisfying. I feel that this subject was a worthy one and I truly enjoyed learning the history of our little broom shop and of the development of the broom industry in the U.S. I have gained a greater respect for the craft. This has fueled my desire to bring our Broom Shop back to life and I welcome any advice or interest from our readers! Just remember, never step over a broom or you may become an old maid or slovenly!

*Happy sweeping..*

British market for many years. In 1994, the removal of U.S. import duties on foreign-made brooms damaged the local broom industry.

**1994 – present:** Small American broom shops compete with imported Mexican broom corn and “straw” brooms as well as synthetic (plastic) brooms from southeast Asia.

## Broom making lore, traditions and myths

Ben Franklin was the first to introduce broom corn in America.

Hadley, MA farmer Levi Dickenson made the first corn broom for his wife who liked it so much that all her friends wanted to buy them. Dissatisfied with his broom's tendency to fall apart, Dickenson invented the foot-treadle operated broom machine.

“Flying off the handle” refers to the broom corn coming loose from the handle as mothers used their brooms to chase children out of the way during house cleaning.

Broom corn brooms are better than plastic brooms because plastic just pushes the dirt around, but broom corn absorbs dust and holds clumps of dirt.



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MUSEUM & VISITORS CENTER  
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**History Trivia Question:** The first accurate census in Connecticut was taken in 1774 when Lebanon's population was 3,960, and was the sixth largest town in population, even larger than Hartford. In 1790 Lebanon's population grew to 4,166. The population was not to surpass that number again until what century and decade?

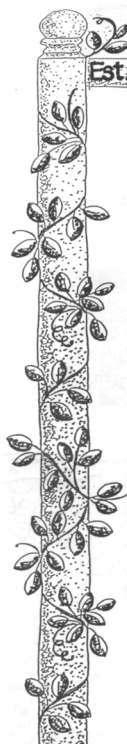


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### A Page from the Past: Lebanon Life 20 years ago



Est. 1992 - Free - Volume 1 - April-June 1992



From the Selectman's Office.....

After many months in the planning, the first issue of Lebanon Life newspaper is finally printed. Residents have asked for a town newspaper to keep them informed of all activities taking place in Lebanon. The newspaper staff and I hope you enjoy this first issue. We welcome your suggestions for improvements to Lebanon Life. The following is an update on some issues presently before the Town:

**1992-93 Budgets**  
Both the municipal and educational budgets have been submitted to the Board of Finance. The BOF will review both budgets within the next two weeks, working with the Boards of Selectmen and Education, to prepare the BOF's budget proposal for the Town's consideration at the Public Hearing on April 26th. Lebanon residents are encouraged to attend the Public Hearing to provide feedback to the BOF concerning their proposal. The Hearing is at the Elementary School at 7:30 p.m.

**Dog Found**

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Cover and article from the first issue  
of Lebanon Life, published in 1992.

**Mayfest**  
Mayfest, Lyman's Celebration of the Arts and Excellence will feature various cultural events throughout May. The culminating activity will be an exhibit and concert on May 21. The exhibit will feature products from the Technology Education Department, renderings done on AutoCad, Vocational Agriculture projects, literature projects and paintings, drawings and 3-d assignments from the Art Department. An evening chorus concert will provide the setting for foreign language readings and a fashion show. Other Mayfest activities will be advertised with posters designed by the Art Department. Among these is a May 14th Senior Art Exhibit held in the Lyman Memorial High School library. Watch for the posters.



Programs, exhibitions & services of the Lebanon Historical Society are made possible in part by a generous grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council.