



# Lebanon Provisions

Vol. 4 No. 3

Spring  
2012

The Lebanon Historical Society Newsletter

## Calendar of Events

All of our programs are open to the public.

**Sunday, April 22**

Liberty Hill

Love Story

1pm

Presenter Ed Tollmann

Free and open to the public

**Wednesday, May 2**

Annual Meeting &

Potluck Supper

**6:00pm Potluck Supper**

**7:00pm Meeting**

Following the meeting is our program,

Remembering the Lebanon

Historical Society

Through the Years.

**Saturday, May 19**

Opening Weekend

for the Historic Sites around the Green.

War Office will open May 1.

**Sunday, June 3**

Revolutionary Tastings

Celebrating CT Trails Day

The historic museums around the green invite everyone to visit and enjoy a tasty treat.

**The Lebanon Historical**

**Society will be open from 12pm to 4pm**

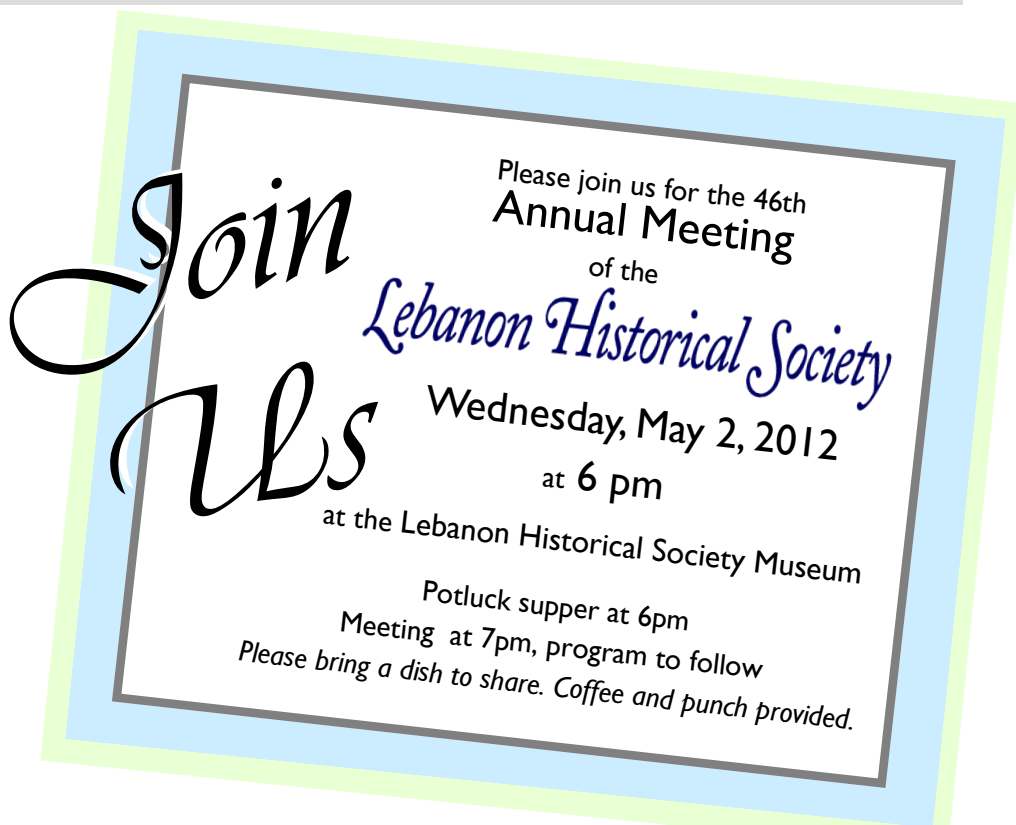
**Saturday, June 9**

"Second Saturdays"

Family Fun Events

Antique car rides, craft demonstrations, animals and much more. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be sold.

**More events on page 4**



## Looking Back

After our potluck supper and annual business meeting, please stay for our program

Remembering the Lebanon Historical Society Through the Years

**Members will be receiving proposed bylaws revisions via mail or email**

**The Nominating Committee presents the following nominees for Board Vacancies:**

**Officers:**

President: Glenn Pianka

Vice President: Brian Bartizek

**Trustees-Chairmen of Standing Committees:**

Collections: Dan Moore

Programs: Suzanne Yeo

Exhibits: Ingrid Treiss

Finance: Connie Berglund

Historic Buildings: Kirsten Westbrook

Trustee-at-large: Marianne Freschlin

**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.

**Board of Trustees**

*President*

Ed Tollmann

*Vice President*

Glenn Pianka

*Treasurer*

Rob Slate

*Secretary*

Sandie Chalifoux

*Buildings & Grounds*

Jim Mello

*Community Events*

Keith LaPorte

*Collections*

Brian Bartizek

*Education*

Sara Cross

*Exhibitions*

Margaret McCaw

*Finance*

Connie Berglund

*Membership & Development*

Mary Lou Beckwith

*Nominating*

Al Vertefeuille

*Personnel*

Betty Forrest

*Publications*

Jacy Worth

*Trustees-at-large*

Linda Heatherly

Suzanne Yeo

Kirsten Westbrook

*Ex-Officio*

Archie Andrews III

*Director*

Donna Baron

## From the President

Ed Tollmann

When I was around twenty years old, Henry Aspinall said to me, "You know Ed, the older you get the faster time goes by." I can remember thinking my old friend was losing it. Well, I'm here to tell you, as most of you know, he was right. Being President for the last five years has gone by like a flash. I think part of the reason is that I've loved every minute and have felt honored to serve. The other big reason is our wonderful Board of Trustees, our staff and, of course, our membership at large.

I am very proud that most of the goals that I set forth at the beginning of my term have been met: spotlighting civic groups and houses of worship in multi-purpose room displays each year; involving more children and getting them to feel comfortable here at the museum; improving the Museum's curb appeal with plantings and regular clean-up; increasing the number of Board members and encouraging them to work closely together with more camaraderie and fellowship. I consider our Board as a family. Many buildings and grounds projects have been completed at the Beaumont House such as restoring electrical power and repairing the south and north walls. We also permanently repaired leaks in the Museum's multi-purpose and boiler room.

A special project was joining the Library of Congress in interviewing veterans for the "Veterans History Project." With the help of Jim Motyka from Lyman Memorial High School, we have completed thirty-some interviews. A DVD of each is here at the Museum. Please stop by and view them. You will be surprised what our Lebanon veterans went through defending our country.

We've increased participation in our June Second Saturday event to attract more visitors to the Museum. Thanks to many crafters, farmers, agricultural equipment collectors, The Farmer's Cow and the Four Seasons Model "T" Club these Saturdays have been very successful and well attended.

The largest project that came along was moving the Buckingham Pastor's study to our grounds. With financial help from the Fortin Foundation and many volunteer hours it has a permanent location at the end of our driveway. With the passing of our benefactor Hugh Adams, I was not sure how things were going to go. Running a deficit for many years, not knowing if his help would cease, I was pleased when we were informed that a trust was set up to keep us solvent.

I was successful in persuading Mr. Adams' attorney and trustee to visit and see what

Lebanon is all about. After a great meeting, tour of the Green and lunch, I came away feeling very confident that the trust will keep Mr. Adams' dreams alive. I've built a very good relationship with them and will continue working as the Society's liaison.

In closing, I want to thank all of you who have showed your faith in me and have encouraged me over the last five years.



## Director's Message

Donna Baron

Spring cleaning is great for the psyche. Finding a place for everything is satisfying, but it can also lead to being able to work efficiently and with more energy. Late this winter, museum staff decided that some rather neglected cleaning and reorganizing was essential. Compared to the committee annual reports in this issue of *Provisions*, housecleaning may not seem especially exciting, but it is typical of how museum staff spend much of their time – not too exciting but important.

In 2011, we welcomed over 1,200 visitors to the Museum to tour our exhibits, attend events or participate in meetings. Thirty people came specifically to conduct genealogical research and many more submitted written requests that our volunteer genealogist Lindy Brunkhorst-Olewine, town historian Alicia Wayland or staff members answered. More than 300 school children and their teachers came on field trips. We also welcomed 25 community college students and teachers from two Teaching America's History programs.

Our web site is regularly updated and records show that we have had 4,903 visitors to the site since May 1, 2011. This past year Kirsten Westbrook created and maintained a Facebook page for us. Several local newspapers including *Lebanon Life*, *Norwich Bulletin*, *The Chronicle*, and *The Reminder*, have been very generous in their coverage of our events and accomplishments. Four times a year, we also work with some great writers and editors to produce the newsletter you are reading now.

Thanks to the generosity of the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Historical Society has received several grants which are allowing us to accomplish more than ever. Two grants provided funds first to research and plan and then to help install the new exhibit *"Long Long Ago: Lebanon's History through its Music 1800-1940"* and will fund a series of concerts in 2012. Another grant made it possible for us to hire a museum education coordinator who is working with local school systems to expand our field trip programming. Yet another grant has allowed the Historical Society to participate in StEPS-CT, a program that will provide professional training for the Board and staff.

Behind the scenes at the Lebanon Historical Society is a **very** busy place as we try to provide members and the Lebanon community with connections to the past through exhibits, programs and publications. Many thanks to everyone who contributes to making this an active and growing organization.



*A great time was had by all at the Old Fashioned Sing-along held on March 18 at the Baptist Church Hall.*



## Thank you!

To all our members old and new who support us with their donations and by supporting our programs

### History Trivia Answer:

**Prince Saunders was the Attorney General of Haiti.**

### 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**

by appointment.

## Upcoming Programs & Events

### **Friday, June 29** **Windham Brass Band** **Outdoor Concert** **6pm-8pm**

Grounds open at 5pm for those who would like to picnic before the concert.

Concert starts at 6pm

Raindate: Friday, August 3

### **Saturday, July 21** **3rd Annual** **"An Evening** **at the Museum"** **5pm to 8pm**

A gala evening of conversation, food, drink, music and auction

**\$25 per person or**  
**\$40 per couple**

### **Saturday, August 18** **Quiet Corner Fiddlers** **6pm to 8pm**

Grounds open at 5pm for those who would like to picnic before the concert.

Concert starts at 6pm

If it rains, this event will be held indoors at the Lebanon Senior Center

### **Saturday, September 29** **Annual Outdoor** **Antiques Show** **9am to 3pm**

You can always visit  
our website  
**www.**

**historyoflebanon.org**  
to see a list of our  
current events  
and programs

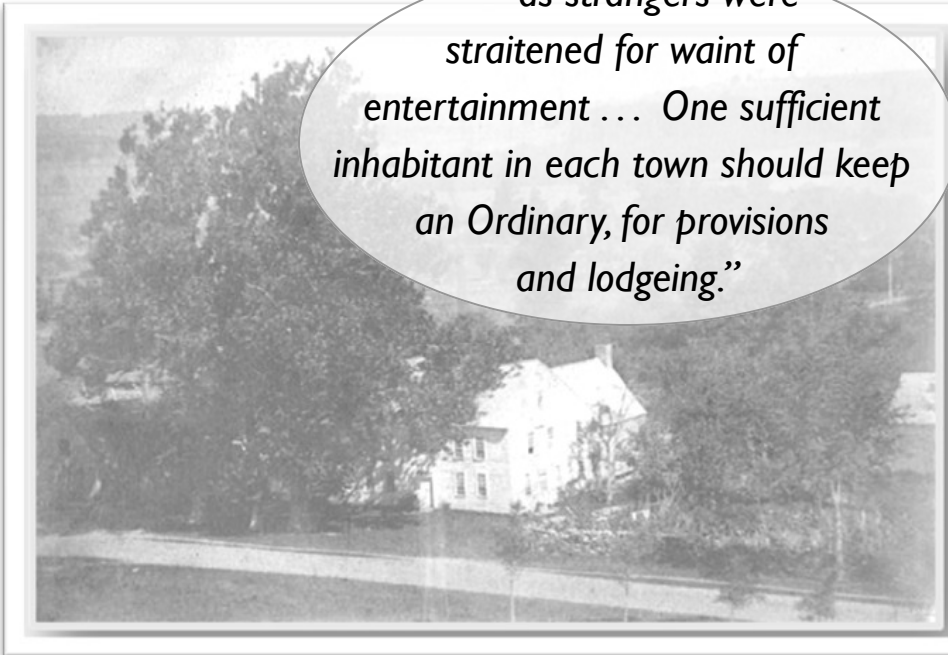
## Tavern Keepers in Colonial Lebanon

By Alicia Wayland

The town center was an important location on the road from Norwich to Hartford and on the southwest route from Boston to New York that ran through Windham to Lebanon.

A 1732 guidebook, *The Vade Mecum for America*, compiled by Thomas Prince (1687-1758), lists the taverns along the Boston-New York route and the distance between them. Samuel Hide's tavern in Lebanon is listed as 92 miles from Boston, lying six miles from Wadden's tavern in

inhabitant in each town should keep an Ordinary, for provisions and lodging." As the only public building besides the meetinghouse, taverns were also important social institutions locally. They functioned not only as inns for travelers but also as meeting places for courts, fraternal organizations, political and social clubs, militia organizations, and for private parties and balls. And it was the place for sharing news and information, where broadsides and



*"as strangers were  
straitened for want of  
entertainment . . . One sufficient  
inhabitant in each town should keep  
an Ordinary, for provisions  
and lodging."*

*c. 1870 photograph of the Alden Tavern on Trumbull Hwy on the site of the current town parking lot.*

Windham and nine miles from the next tavern on the route, Kellog's [sic] in Colchester.

Also called ordinaries, taverns were important markers for road journeys in colonial times and were mandated by law. In 1644 the Connecticut colonial legislature ordered that "as strangers were straitened for want of entertainment . . . one sufficient

newspapers were posted, and mail was held for distribution.

Over the years, dozens of men and a few women were licensed to keep a tavern in Lebanon from colonial times until well into the 19th century. Widows could be granted licenses to help them support a family. The first woman tavern keeper licensed in Lebanon was Ann Gray, widow of

*Continued on page 11*

**Lebanon Historical Society**

# Annual Committee Reports

**Buildings and Grounds Committee: Jim Mello, Chair** During the last year, many projects have been completed to enhance the Museum and its grounds. Patio umbrellas have been replaced. New carpeting in the multipurpose room, some offices and hallways, as well as the entrance way has been installed. Replacement chairs, which are much easier to manage, have taken the place of the older heavier ones. Parking lot lights have been installed to enhance safety for evening events. To minimize damage to our roofs, gutters and downspouts on the north side of the building have been installed, and a heater cord and ice dam preventer devices have been installed over the patio entrance. As a result of a collaboration with Windham Adult Education classes, stone wall repairs and the pathway to Pastor's Library have been completed. Four heat/exchanger/air conditioner units have been installed to stabilize the heating/cooling of the building for the comfort of visitors, members, and employees. The Beaumont House maintenance project continued as the North side of the Beaumont House was rebuilt and repainted, both inside and outside. Routine maintenance continued by addressing health and safety issues, like pumping the septic tank, testing the water supply, and recharging fire extinguishers. Plans for the coming year include continuing to stabilize and preserve the Beaumont House by scraping and painting both the east and west sides, along with work on windows to avoid any further moisture damage to areas. Work on the Pastor's Library building will continue, and plans are being developed for a much needed storage building that will be situated next to the smokehouse.

**Collections Committee: Brian Bartizek, Chair** The collections committee members are Marty Kendall, Sarah Griswold, Alicia Wayland, Emil Pocock, Harry Eck, Glenn Pianka, and myself. The committee meets as necessary to review new acquisitions. Also, Marty has done a great job managing the library collections. The museum's new exhibits this year produced many new and interesting donations for the collection. Some were used in the exhibits and others have been displayed in the showcases in the meeting room and front hall. We are still looking for items to furnish the Beaumont House as a late 18th century farmhouse in Lebanon. Since I have served my allotted two terms as chairman, I will be stepping down but plan to continue to work with the committee.

**Community Events Committee: Keith LaPorte, Chair** 2011 saw Community Events in action. We began with the Memorial Day Parade and its theme of the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. Our float honored some of Lebanon's finest who went off to serve in this bloody conflict, including Capt. Frederick Shalk. For three years running we garnered a Parade Float Award. For some time, conversation has ensued on how to utilize our wonderful patio. The month of August realized, our second "An Evening at the Museum," With the sound of jazz wafting through the air, and a net profit after expenses of \$3,782.53 murmurs began about planning the 3rd annual. Stay tuned. Our Antiques Show tradition observes the coming and going of the years. The rain lifted by dawn on the fourth Saturday of September as LHS anchored down once again a most bustling day in the town of Lebanon. I am happy to report that after expenses we earned a net profit of \$9,439.49. On December 4th we hosted hundreds of visitors to the museum and Beaumont House to help ring in the holiday season with the carol sing and tree lighting. As always, the sum of the parts equals the

*Continued on next page*



*Mark your calendars!*

**Free Outdoor Concerts  
sponsored  
by the Lebanon  
Historical Society**

 **Also funded  
in part  
by the  
Connecticut  
Humanities Council**

**Friday, June 29**

**Windham Brass Band**

Will perform from  
**6pm to 8pm**

Grounds open at 5pm for  
those who would like to  
picnic before the concert

Co-sponsored by the  
Lebanon Senior Center

Farmer's Cow Lemonade  
and popcorn  
will be available

**Saturday, August 18**

**Quiet Corner Fiddlers**

will perform  
**6pm to 8pm**

Grounds open at 5pm for  
those who would like to  
picnic before the concert

## **A Good Read**

by Alicia Wayland

### **Post Roads & Iron Horses:**

#### **Transportation in**

### **Connecticut from Colonial Times to the Age of Steam**

by Richard DeLuca

This is a wonderfully readable account of the history of transportation in Connecticut.

The introductory chapter gives a detailed look at the six geomorphic regions of the state that shows how the geology of the land influenced the development of the different modes of transportation.

The geomorphic regions provide a much richer understanding of the land and the people than the arbitrary boundaries imposed by counties and planning agencies.

Each chapter then stands alone with a focus on the colonial era, turnpikes and stagecoaches, steamboats and canals, and the railroad. Many engaging anecdotes tell how transportation affected the daily lives of people while dozens of illustrations further illuminate the story.

DeLuca ties the story together using three themes—land, technology and law—throughout each chapter that integrate Connecticut into the broader regional and national history.

He is now working on a companion book that will cover the story of Connecticut transportation into the twentieth century.

## **Annual Committee Reports**

whole. Many thanks to all of the volunteers past, present and future, who help make us whole. Tallyho!

**Education Committee: Sara Cross,** It has been a busy year! At our last annual meeting we enjoyed a great presentation on Lebanon after the break with Columbia in 1804 by Alicia Wayland. We began our "year of music" with a wonderful memorial tribute concert of Gershwin & Porter tunes. With the Columbia Historical Society, we co-sponsored a colonial music concert performed by "Seven Times Salt," we entertained many children on "Crafty Fridays," in July and August, and again at the tree lighting in December. We continued our genealogy program series in October and our popular Preservation Workshops in January and February. Our Old Fashioned Sing-along was held at the First Baptist Church parish hall with the help of Bertie Hawkins and her "Parlor Singers." We hope to see you on April 22 for a special program presented by Ed Tollmann titled, "Liberty Hill Love Story." The music continues in 2012 with a series of indoor and outdoor concerts.

**Exhibition Committee: Margaret McCaw, Chair** This year has been busy with many exhibits, large and small, being closed, newly opened, and in the planning stages. The community exhibit honoring Lebanon Boy Scouts was closed in January of 2011. The community exhibit "Goshen Hill Congregational Church and Goshen Hill Community" - our yearly look at the history of one of Lebanon's churches - opened March 27, 2011 and closed in August 2011. The major exhibit "Long, Long Ago:" Lebanon's History through Its Music, 1800-1940 opened in January 2012 and will close in December 2012. On March 18, 2012, a unique extension of this exhibit was the "Old Fashioned Sing-Along" held at the First Baptist Church and utilized the music from the exhibit (over 60 people attended this event!). Items from our permanent collection are on display. The community exhibit "Lebanon Fair" opened September 2011 and closed in March 2012.

**Finance Committee: Connie Berglund, Chair** The Finance Committee, composed of three members and ex officio officers, is responsible for managing all aspects of the Society's finances. The Committee oversees the preparation, presentation for approval and implementation of the yearly operating budget. Reports of the Society's endowment and investments are reviewed through quarterly statements and yearly meetings with account managers, as appropriate. In 2011, the committee revised the Lebanon Historical Society Investment Policy which was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2012. Staff members of the Society also presented for the committee's review a revision of the Society's Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual in December, 2011. Finance Committee members are committed to assisting the Society to improve and wisely manage its endowment and expenditures for the long term benefit of the Lebanon Historical Society and its community.

**Membership and Development: Mary Lou Beckwith, Chair** Membership: With Alicia Lamb's efficient assistance, the Membership committee has been able to continue to reach out to the community, and during this past fiscal year has received multiple new memberships. This dovetails nicely with the Lebanon Historical Society's desire to encourage both young and old to participate, as these

*Continued on next page*

## Annual Committee Reports

memberships consists of 6 family, 1 patron and 2 seniors. Membership records indicate 215 members (as of 3-27-12), and the Committee will actively "...be responsible for over-seeing membership renewals, soliciting new members, and regularly assessing membership growth." The Membership Committee would like to thank all those who help to achieve these goals.

**Development:** To continue to support the ongoing work of the Lebanon Historical Society, the Development Committee continues to reach out to donors through its Annual Appeal Campaign. In 2011-12 the Annual Appeal raised \$6,330.00, as of 4-4-12, and is still in progress. In 2010-2011 the Annual Appeal funds received this fiscal year include \$635.00. Committee members will continue to encourage donors to help "...preserve and interpret all aspects of the history of Lebanon..." by contributing to the Society, in Annual Appeals and other activities. We appreciate and thank, all who support and work hard to preserve Lebanon's history.

**Nominating Committee: Al Vertifeuille, Chair** This was the first year since I have served as Chair of the nominating committee that we have had to fill no vacancies during the year. We have recruited board members interested in the museum and who are committed to fulfilling their terms of office. At this annual meeting we will be filling two officer positions. The six nominees represent current members being reappointed or new members who are replacements for members leaving the board after having served three consecutive two-year terms (bylaws required.)

The nominating committee also has responsibility for annually reviewing the bylaws and recommending changes, if necessary, at the annual meeting. This year we are proposing a number of changes that better reflect the way in which the organization operates. Our Director, Donna Baron, has adjusted staff responsibilities, therefore bylaws must better reflect the way the organization operates. We have an outstanding Board with the best support staff I have ever worked with.

**Publications Committee: Jacy Worth, Chair** The Publications Committee meets monthly to plan the content and layout for our newsletter *Provisions*, circulated quarterly. Our goal is to provide our readers with interesting and informative articles on Lebanon's Revolutionary War history as well as subjects relating to more current local history. We collaborate with our Director and staff as well as the Board of Trustees to keep you abreast of activities and exhibits at the museum. The committee always welcomes suggestions for future articles from our readers. We are also on the lookout for those interested in writing as well. In order to defer the cost of the newsletter, we offer sponsorships. This past year, with the help of sponsors, we've been able to incorporate some colorful pages into the newsletter! Our newsletter is now available to members interested in receiving it on line. The Society's web site displays past issues as well. The committee also works with the museum staff in assessing literature for sale in our gift shop. I am indebted to and heartily thank my dedicated and talented committee members: Alicia Wayland, Betty Forrest, Donna Baron, Grace Sayles, Marty Kendall and Alicia Lamb. We truly appreciate those who have submitted ideas and research for articles we have published. We are very proud of our newsletter and hope that you continue to enjoy reading *Provisions*.

## Exhibit News



### *Hats On!*

Just in time for the annual meeting on Wednesday, May 2 our meeting room display cases will be filled with a wonderful collection of vintage ladies' hats on loan from the Franklin Historical Society. Please stop in and take a look.





*Black and white photo of the Beaumont homestead at Village Hill, LHS Collection*



A true and perfect inventory of the goods and chattels belonging to the estate of Mr. Samuel Beaumont, late of Lebanon, County of Windham and State of Connecticut, deceased, as taken & approved by Mr. Nathan Clark & Mr. Abel Goodwin, June 13, 1814:

*Below are some excerpts from Beaumont's inventory:*

18 pair linen sheets  
woolen [sheets]  
11 pair pillow cases  
4 towels birdseye  
table cloth birdseye  
12 yards of tow cloth  
13 yards brown plain  
1 feather bed kersey ticking  
plain bolster & pillows  
1 red bedstead and cord and  
underbed ticking  
1 feather bed striped ticking cotton  
[?] bolster & pillows  
1 blue bedstead and cord  
and underbed ticking  
1 feather bed striped ticking woolen  
[?] bolster & one pillow 1 old  
bedstead cord &  
underbed ticking  
1 old bed hen's feathers  
bolsters and pillows  
1 old bedstead cord &  
underbed ticking  
1 old trundle bed pigeon  
feathers & bolster

## Probate Inventories, Historic House Museums and Furnishings Plans

*By Donna Baron*

Modern media (glossy magazines, cable television and YouTube) have made peaking through the windows to see how other people's home are furnished

pretty easy. We can check out the interiors of English country manors, Christmas decorations at the White House or the living room where a family's dog sings. When trying to furnish an 18<sup>th</sup>-century building like the Beaumont House, however, we do not have such tools. Photography was not even introduced in America until 1839. Although studio-style photos of Victorian mansions can date to around 1880, images of ordinary people's homes did not become common until after the Second World War.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, family deaths often provided a different kind of snapshot into what was in the house. As

part of the probate process, a judge might appoint two neighbors to inventory all the contents of a home or business. Probate inventories were not always taken, but might be especially if a head of household died without a will, if there were under-aged heirs, or if the estate had many debts. Such inventories were occasionally room-by-room walkthroughs, but more often were organized by category: clothing, furniture, kitchen ware, dairy equipment or farm tools. The Lebanon Historical Society has one historic house, the Beaumont House, as part of its collection. Now that structural repairs have been made, we are looking at how the house is furnished and whether we can improve the furnishings plan to better tell the story of the family who lived there. While we do not have any interior images, we do have relevant probate records for Samuel Beaumont who died in 1813 at 58. Samuel was the father of the well-known Dr. William Beaumont who grew up in the house.

Samuel Beaumont's inventory is rather lengthy and quite detailed, typical for a man still in his working prime. Samuel had only a little clothing, at least by 2012 standards. However, the 18 pairs of linen sheets, 11 pairs of pillow cases, 15 blankets, coverlets and quilts and 7 bedsteads are more than we might find in a modern middle class home. Anyone familiar with the Beaumont house will, in fact, wonder where all those bedsteads might fit. In 1814, the Beaumonts had 19 chairs, a case of drawers and a chest, a desk, two tables, 2 candle stands and a "wooden wheeled clock and cherry case."

The kitchen was fully fitted with iron and tin cooking equipment, dishware for dining, and everything needed to make cheese and butter. There were a few books, spinning wheels and fibers and some stored food. Samuel's occupations as a farmer and cooper are confirmed by the tools listed and by the sow with piglets, three heifers, four cows, draft horse and mare with a calf and twenty-five sheep. He owned "150 acres of land including buildings."

Although Dr. William Beaumont had moved away several years before his father's death, the inventory provides a glimpse of how the house was furnished during his boyhood in the 1790s. As we work to develop a furnishings plan we will be looking for milk pails and pans and cheese tubs and a butter-churn for the buttery. We may look for a wooden works tall clock and maybe another bed frame or two.



# Liberty Hill Love Story

Transcribed letters from the Oehlers

April 26, 1898

My Dearest Darling Minnie,

As I am not coming down to the depot tonight I thought I would write to you as I cannot be one night without sending you a word. I love you my dearest darling Minnie with my whole heart and soul and mind and body but I cannot express it in words my dearest. This is the dreariest weather I ever saw in all my life. It makes me feel miserable. My cold is not better yet. I do not know very much to write but I suppose I can tell you how much I love you. If you love me as I do you, as I know you do, no one can cut our love in two which I know will not happen. Oh my dear my heart aches to see you and I wish I could see you all the time so I can hug and kiss you whenever I wanted

to. There is no love like true love and true love never runs smooth, you know that by experience. I wish the same as you did in your last letter to me that we might be married when I am 21 and live a happy life. It will be so if a lucky chance falls to me. Well my dearest darling Minnie I must close with my best wishes and greatest love to you dearest darling Minnie I send you herewith one million kisses and the same amount of hugs. I remain and always shall remain yours, lovingly forever. Henry

May 24, 1912

My dearest darling Henry:

I received the postal yesterday morning, and am glad you got back all right, darling. It has been good weather since you went back, and quite warm most of the time. I am glad of it for there is so much to be done that I hardly know which to do first. I have the back lawn raked all but the triangle, and it look[s] very good considering. You would not believe that anyone could get such a [problem?] with dandelions, and nothing I have seems to take it out. I wish you would bring some javelle water, also some toilet paper. I also spoke about a sunbonnet for Baby. You might see if you can get a white one for about .25 cents, not over .50 cents. You are my precious boy, and it seems as if it had been a year since I saw your smiling face, and I love you so much that I wish I could have your smiling face with me all the time, my darling. Take good care of yourself and I will try to do the same. Henry has been very busy planting [the] garden since you went back. Seems as if he gained some strength if pile of refuse off of such a small piece of ground. I love you, sweetheart and I wish I could clasp you in my arms this minute, and give you a good hugging and kissing on your beautiful rosy lips, my own husband. Baby has been very fussy for a couple of days. It seems as if he was lonesome for you, darling. Missie[?] us working outside where he can see us. Have seen nothing of Chris as yet guess he is going to spend the summer. The farmers are rushing there [sic] planting now that it is such good weather. I find that Baby's good dresses are all stained slowly.[?] I am waiting to hear what there is new about the wedding, for the whole affair is so strange. There is about a dozen salvia planted up now, but I hardly think they will amount to anything this summer.

I love you with my whole heart, soul, mind, and body, and I wish I could clapse you in my arms and give you a good hugging, and kissing on your sweet lips my own darling. I will close with millions, and millions of hugs and kisses and my best, truest, and everlasting love for my darling husband forever.

From your own true loving wife, Minnie

All join me in sending love to all. Homer sends some fat kisses to Papa. I love you, pet.

Lebanon Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 2012



Sunday, April 22  
at 1pm  
Liberty Hill Love  
Story

Enjoy an afternoon  
getting to know the  
Oehlers of Liberty  
Hill through  
their own words.

From 1897 to 1940,  
a remarkable  
correspondence of  
hundreds of handwritten  
letters tells the story of  
Minnie Clarke and Henry  
Oehlers of Liberty Hill and  
New York City.

Join Ed Tollmann as he  
sets the stage  
in Liberty Hill and shares  
details from the letters.

This program is free  
and open to the public.

Light refreshments



**New or replacement  
granite bricks  
available for the  
memorial walkway**

Sadly, the cast concrete of our memorial bricks has not held up as well as we wanted. Some bricks have become illegible. If families would like to replace their bricks, new gray granite bricks are available at cost, \$36 each.

Replacement bricks can be placed in the same location as the fading bricks or can be relocated to higher ground.

If you would like to order replacement bricks, please call the museum office at 860-642-6579. New memorial brick orders will be filled with granite bricks for a donation of \$100 to the brick fund. Donors will still be able to select the wording for the dedication. Please contact the museum if you would like more information.

## Wigs were in High Fashion for Colonial Men

By Alicia Wayland

In the 18th century, fashionable men donned an expensive banyan for leisure wear, a lifestyle garment of the “rich and famous” featured in the winter issue of *Provisions*. The banyan was usually topped by a negligee cap, a turban-like cap worn in place of a wig.

The wig, worn in public places, marked the wearer as a man of wealth and substance.

For almost two centuries men followed the lead of two successive French kings, Louis XIII and Louis XIV, who became

prematurely bald and chose to wear wigs. Because both kings set the fashions for the French court, wig wearing soon became de rigeur among the aristocracy on the Continent and in Great Britain.

Wigs were very expensive to make and expensive to care for and the custom of wearing wigs by the gentry and merchants rapidly spread through colonial America. Wig styles varied over the years, from the lofty and curly to the full bottom wig to the bag wig to the bob wig to the tie-wig. John Trumbull’s first double portrait of his parents, dated 1775, shows his father, Governor Jonathan Trumbull, wearing a full-bottom wig, which was no longer in style.

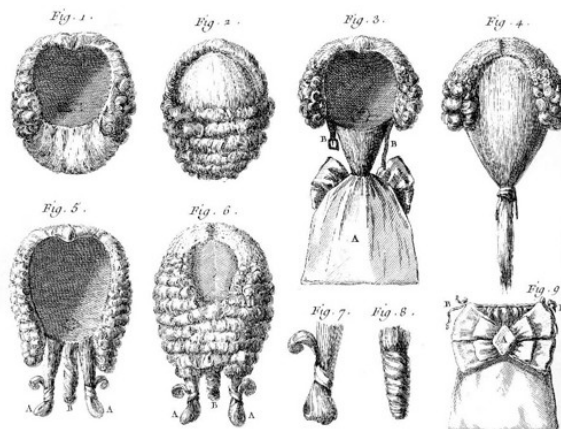
By then, the tie-wig was the most popular wig style and dates circa 1750-1776. The hair was cut long and tied with a black ribbon into a queue with one curl

at each side. The Connecticut Historical Society owns a rare surviving example of a tie-wig thought to have been owned by Comfort Brewster Jr. (1745-1822) of Lebanon.

Comfort was a descendant of Elder William Brewster of the Mayflower. His great grandfather, Benjamin Brewster Sr., had settled in Norwich and was an

original proprietor of the Five Mile Square in Lebanon. He gave his two shares in the Square to his sons William and Benjamin Junior, who were early settlers in Lebanon. Benjamin had seven children, including a son, Comfort Brewster (1711-1771).

Comfort married Deborah Smith (d. 1773) of Bolton in 1736. The couple had five children, three daughters and two sons, the first son being Comfort Junior. The family appears to have been well off, living on what is now Route 87 near the intersection with Waterman Road. At a town meeting on August 19, 1751, “the Town Granted Liberty to Comfort Brewster to Set up a Syder Mill in the Street against His House & next to Capt. Huntingtons Lot & to fence in a yard not Seven Rods.” Cider making was profitable and the size of the mill and the town granting permission to put it up indicates the high status of Comfort in the community. The younger Comfort would have ordered his wig when in his late twenties. He married Elizabeth Abell of Lebanon in 1770 and they had seven children. Comfort may have been in business



*Illustrations of 18th century Men's Wigs*

*Continued on next page*

## Tavern Keepers in Colonial Lebanon

*Continued from page 4*

tavern keeper Simeon Gray. She was granted a license after his death in 1742 until her remarriage in 1744. Hannah Barker received a license for 1775 after the death of her husband, tavern keeper Ignatius Barker, in 1774. The widowed Elizabeth Alden, with five children to support, continued the tavern business after her husband died in 1764.

In 1703 the General Assembly gave the authority to grant licenses to the county courts. Abstracts of Windham County court records from 1726 to 1736, compiled by Killingly historian Marcella Houle Pasay, provide the

names of nine license holders in Lebanon during those years when Lebanon was part of Windham County. The taverns were scattered throughout the town, which was then about 80 square miles in size and included the present town of Columbia. The nine tavern keepers and the years they were granted licenses from 1726-1736 are: Joseph Clarke 1726-1731; 1732-1736/ Nehemiah Clauson 1726-1735/ Samuel Hide 1726, 1727-1729-1733/ John Woodward 1726-1728/ John Calkin 1728, 1732/ Gershom Hinckley 1732-1735/ John Calkin 2nd or 3rd 1732, 1734, 1735/ Caleb Hide 1734-1735/

## Wigs were in High Fashion for Colonial Men

*Continued from previous page*

with his younger brother Daniel because he bought the one-third interest in two shops that his sister Ann Rogers had inherited as her share of Daniel's estate after his death in 1775.

In 1805 a court granted Comfort his sister Deborah's one-third interest in a house and sizable parcels of land she had received from Daniel's estate. She was deeply in debt to Comfort and was declared insane.

Comfort's probate record of 1822

valued his estate at \$3,288.80. The inventory of his belongings confirms his comfortable status. Besides fine furniture, he owned a large wardrobe of quality clothing. Wigs fell out of fashion following the Revolutionary War so there was no wig listed. But perhaps Comfort's old wig had been given to one of his children as a keepsake that eventually led to its place in the CHS collections.

## From the Pastor's Library Ledgers:



*Notes from  
the Lebanon First  
Congregational Church ledgers  
regarding the founding of the  
Pastor's Library as abstracted  
by Martha Kendall*

"The Buckingham Pastoral Library of the Congregational Church, South Society Lebanon, Conn was founded by a gift from Governor William Buckingham of one thousand dollars to that church as is witnessed by the letter of his Excellency Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> 1864; and the letter of acceptance in reply Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1865; of the church by Reverend O.D. Hine, Pastor; both of which are hereto attached."

On the acceptance of the gift, the church elected as a permanent committee for the fund and library, Messrs. Learned Hebard, Nathaniel B. Williams and Hart Talcott.

"These books of records and catalogue costing about thirty-five dollars were presented by the founder [Governor Buckingham] in 1865."

"The building, not being finished as originally planned, Mr. Hart Talcott presented in 1870 an inside entrance or vestibule and closet, with stained bookcases on two of its sides, and a butternut woodbox, all at a cost of ninety two dollars..."



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**History Trivia Question:** A Lebanon former slave Cuff Saunders earned his freedom by serving in the Revolutionary War. His son Prince Saunders attended Moor's Charity School at Dartmouth College and in 1806 became the first teacher of black children in Colchester. Do you know what other prestigious title Lebanon native, Prince Saunders had when he died in 1839?

## An Evening *At the* Museum



**SAVE THE DATE**

Saturday, July 21

5pm to 8pm

Tickets \$25 pp \$40 couple



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