



Lebanon Provisions

Vol. 7 No. 3

Summer
2015

The Lebanon Historical Society Newsletter

Calendar Of Events

All programs are open to the public

Sunday, May 31

11 am—12:30pm

Open House Coffee Hour

Featuring an exhibit about the First Congregational Church of Lebanon. Church members and the general public are invited to view the display while enjoying refreshments.



Saturday, June 13

10 am—3pm

"Second Saturday" in June

Our free fun-filled family day.

Take a ride in an antique truck or car around the Lebanon Green.

Watch demonstrations by craftsmen of all types. Hands-on activities too!

This event is free.

Hot dogs and hamburgers for sale.



More Events on Pages 4 & 5

The Airline Train/Trail

By Donna Koenig

Over one hundred years ago one of the most famous trains in New England ran through Lebanon. Many wealthy people and businessmen rode it. President Benjamin Harrison heard so much about the line that he rode it from New York to Boston.

Rudyard Kipling rode from his home in Vermont to visit his editor in New York.

This train line had a very tough start. Back in 1846 Charles Alsop of Middletown received a charter creating

the New York & Boston Railroad Company. He envisioned a train line that ran from New York to Boston in a straight line through New Haven, Middletown, Willimantic and on into Rhode Island and into Massachusetts. The politicians in Hartford, as well as the Connecticut River maritime lobby, fought against this plan and caused setbacks and delays. The route itself was somewhat of a problem. The Connecticut River, as well as many other large and small rivers and brooks, needed to be crossed. The valleys needed trestles and cuts made through ledges. By 1867, the charter expired

with little being done.

David Lyman revived the idea of the Air Line Railroad and formed the New Haven, Middletown and Willimantic Railroad. He convinced the State to allow a 1,250 ft. draw bridge across the



Lyman Viaduct crossing over the Dickenson Creek in Colchester. The Lyman viaduct was named after David Lyman.

Connecticut River in Middletown. By 1870, the line was running from New Haven to Middletown and by 1873 you could continue over the river and into Willimantic. The building of the bridge spanning the Connecticut River, the cut-outs through the ledge and the large trestles necessary to ford the valleys were an enormous cost which evidently bankrupted the line.

Another railroad company, The New York & New England, finished the section from Willimantic to Putnam and then connected to existing lines into Boston. By 1876, *The Federal Express*, the

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**The mission of the
Lebanon Historical
Society**

*To encourage a sense
of community, the
Lebanon Historical
Society connects
residents and visitors
with the people, places,
objects and stories
of the Town's past.*

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Donna Baron

From the President

Glenn Pianka

We have finally come completely out of that long winter and, once again, our team of member volunteers came forward to complete the task of the property winter clean-up. Ten members toiled continuously from eight to noon and we were just able to cross all of the items off of the list. If it had not been for Ron Drum and his crew doing some earlier raking and clean-up, we certainly would not have finished. The largest item waited until the following

Saturday morning when eight volunteers, with the assistance of Ed Tollmann's and my tractor, pulled all of the wooden parking lot "bumpers" from their twisted, chipped, and unsightly original locations and replaced them with concrete bollards.

Our 49th annual meeting took place on Sunday May 3, 2015. Two positions needed to be filled due to bylaw requirements. Jacy Worth has returned to the board as Community Events Chairperson to fill vacating Keith Laporte who served since March, 2008 and Al Vertefeuille has also returned as Chairperson of Finance to fill vacating Connie Berglund who has served since 2009. I thank you all for your exemplary service and look forward to the great work ahead.

The Beaumont House project has reactivated with the stone wall currently being constructed and re-constructed out front. Backfill will follow soon thereafter and things should look prettier before Memorial Day. The chimney top will also be re-installed and the interpretive planning committee can go to town on the inside exhibits.

James Jesse Megson has just received his Eagle Scout rank. His project was to build extensive shelving inside our "red barn" storage building. I am currently working

with another Eagle Scout candidate who is proposing to build a full scale copy of the hearse house of the Exeter cemetery for our use at the LHS complex. This will be the third Eagle Scout candidate in Lebanon who has utilized the resources of the Historical Society to create a mutually beneficial project. It warms my heart to see youth flourish while we simultaneously achieve our mission goals.

2016 marks our 50th anniversary and I have charged the board and staff with some special ways to mark this incredible milestone. If you have any ideas, I would be glad to hear them from you while you are attending *An Evening At The Museum* in July. Get your tickets EARLY since this has been a sold out event. Happy Spring and Summer to all !!!



*Glenn Pianka, Jesse Megson and Ed Tollmann
at Jesse's Eagle Scout court of honor induction ceremony*



Thank you

**To Keith LaPorte
& Connie Berglund
for your many years
of service to the
Lebanon Historical
Society as members
of board of trustees.**

Director's Message

Donna Baron

What a Change 50 Years Makes

Celebrating the Lebanon Historical Society's First Half-Century

At the 2015 Annual Meeting, Historical Society president Glenn Pianka challenged staff and volunteers to make 2016 a year of celebration. In 1966, Lebanon residents incorporated a new organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the town's history and heritage. Lots of hard work by dedicated volunteers has allowed the Historical Society to become one of the best heritage organizations in the state and now is a great time to commemorate accomplishments of the past and anticipate goals for the future.

As a first step, we are turning to you – the members and constituents of the Lebanon Historical Society. How would you like to celebrate? Please send us your ideas for publications, exhibits, programs, parties or events. At this point all ideas are welcome and encouraged. Your suggestions will be forwarded to the Publications, Exhibits, Programs and Community Events committees to consider as they plan 2016 activities.

To share a suggestion, please visit the Museum or contact the Museum staff at 860-642-6579 or museum@historyoflebanon.org.

WELCOME

TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Family Membership

Douglas A. Barton
Hebron

Bruce & Leigh Ruckdeschel
Lebanon

Individual Membership

Cindy Knierim
Hazlet, NJ

Glen & Shayla Coutu
Lebanon

Senior Membership

Edward & Darlene Hathaway,
Lebanon

Jean Kroehle
Columbia

*Don't miss out on some good old
fashioned fun!*

Saturday, June 13

from 10am to 3pm

"Second Saturday"

Free Family Fun



Lebanon Historical Society
MUSEUM & VISITORS CENTER
Located on the historic Lebanon Green

856 Trumbull Hwy., Lebanon • 860-642-6579
www.historyoflebanon.org

History Trivia Answer:

The Jonathan Trumbull Library was established at a town meeting on October 5, 1896.

It was first located in the War Office, in space rented by the town from its owner, the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. The town appropriated \$100 for the library's annual expenses, which included \$50 for the annual salary of a part-time librarian.

Contact Us:

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

860-642-6579

museum@historyoflebanon.org
www.historyoflebanon.org

Museum Hours:

Wed. thru Sat. 12pm to 4pm

**Library & Research
Center by appointment.**

Calendar Of Events

**Wednesday, July 8
6:30pm**

"Eastern Connecticut Native People and Their Stone Artifacts"

State Archaeologist,
and UConn professor
Brian Jones lectures on
Eastern Connecticut native
people and presents a
show-and-tell of stone tools.

Members free,
non-members \$2
Refreshments served



Saturday, July 18

5pm– 8pm

"An Evening at the Museum" gala

Wine & Beer tasting,
silent auction and a light supper
all held under the stars.

\$35 per person

\$60 a couple

By invitation only.

If you have not received
your invitation by June 8th,
please let us know by calling
860-642-6579.



Saturday, September 26

9am– 3pm

"49th Annual Antiques Show"

on the Lebanon Green

Held rain or shine

\$5 admission

Free parking

Refreshments available
for purchase all day

***If you are interested in
volunteering for the antiques
show please call the museum
at 860-642-6579***

The Dr. Danielson House

By Alicia Wayland

Known historically as the Dr. Danielson House, this Italianate-style home at 927 Trumbull Highway may be more familiar currently as the site of the Lebanon Art Gallery. The seasonal gallery opened in the barn in back of the house last summer and a sign on the street pointed the way to the new attraction. The gallery, which closed over the winter months, will probably not be open again since the owner, Sandra Samolis, plans to sell the house.



garage is now located on the north corner of the former triangle.

The house and small barn were probably built in 1860, shortly after Jesse Wright purchased the land in May. The house

actually faces south with the entrance looking towards Goshen Hill Road. The current owner and her late husband Allen Fernald added a large addition to the west to connect the house to the barn. A previous owner had built two additions to the original barn to make it more spacious and useful for equipment storage.

Before moving here, Jesse Wright raised his family probably on a farm on West Town Street where his children grew up. His son, Arthur Williams Wright, earned the first Ph.D. in Science awarded in the United States while a student at Yale University. Arthur Wright was a pioneer researcher in physics and astronomy at Yale. The Wright Nuclear Structure Laboratory at Yale is named for him. Arthur Wright married Susan Silliman, great-great-granddaughter of Governor Jonathan

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Thank you for your generous donations to our 2015 Annual Appeal



Anonymous (4)
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 Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home
 Bender's Oil Service, Inc.
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This issue of
 **Provisions**
 was also supported by
 a donation made
 in memory of
 Delton Briggs 



Annual Appeal
donations that arrive
 after our publication date
 will appear in the next
 issue of *Provisions* along
 with donations to a
 dedicated fund
 such as:

Publications

Genealogy Research

**An Evening at the
Museum 2015**

**Beaumont
Restoration**

**Pastor's Library
Restoration**

**Slate
Genealogy Fund**

**McCaw Memorial
Library Fund**

**As well as any
general donations**

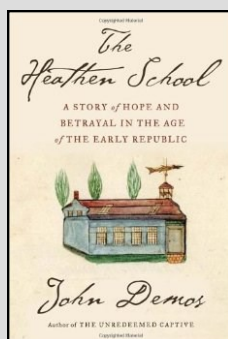


A Good Read

By Betty Forrest

The Heathen School

By John Demos



Think 1817 to 1826.
North West corner of
Connecticut. Cornwall.
Population.... 1600 souls.
A new Republic.

This is the setting of The Heathen School a book by Yale Professor John Demos. The formal name of the Heathen School was the Foreign Mission School which was sponsored by the American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions. The goal of the school was to educate the heathen youth from all parts of the earth for becoming Christians.

This non-fiction book covers the beginning of the school as well as its demise. It describes the times, the township of Cornwall both then and now, distant places such as Hawaii, the Native American nations especially that of the Cherokee, as well as many others. It taught about 100 young men throughout its tenure.

The reader becomes acquainted with many of the early recruited students

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Windmills

By Alicia Wayland

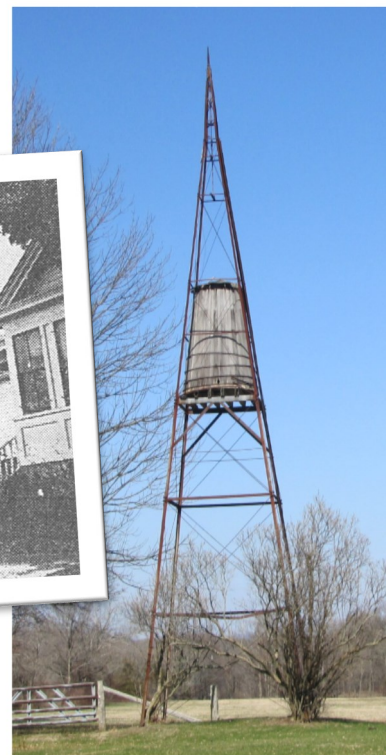
Windmills have a centuries-old history with records of their use dating back to the Middle Ages.

Windmills have been used to power grist mills, sawmills and other machines throughout the Orient and Europe. The Dutch even invented a so-called "scoop"

windmill that could transfer vast amounts of water to basins and canals but could lift it only 16 feet.

Then, in 1854, Daniel Halladay, a young mechanic in Ellington, Connecticut, patented the first commercially viable windmill that could lift groundwater to the surface from a depth of several hundred feet. What also set Halladay's invention off from other windmills was that it was self-governing and needed no human intervention. Halladay's windmill could turn itself into the wind in stormy weather and its folding wooden sails allowed them to fold in on themselves and gradually reopen as wind speeds diminished.

Halladay moved his operation to Coventry, Connecticut, in 1855 where he produced windmills until 1863 when he moved to Batavia, Illinois, to take advantage of the much larger and growing market for windmills. With the best land with water resources already taken, new settlers seeking land had to settle on the semi-arid Great Plains where the water-pumping windmills brought life-saving water for livestock and crops. Windmills were also accountable for the rapid expansion of the railroads through the western plains where they pumped water into huge storage tanks beside the tracks that serviced the steam



Photos show the Windmill located at 105 W. Town St. taken in 1958 and the last remaining windmill on the McCaw farm in 2015.

locomotives pulling the trains.

Connecticut farmers had used small windmills for many years, primarily to pump water for livestock and household use. But information about where these windmills were situated is hard to come by. In Lebanon, there was a windmill at Redwood, the historic home located at the southwest corner of West Town Street and Exeter Road. According to the *Norwich Bulletin*, in April 1913, a fire threatened the destruction of Redwood when the old tenant house next to it burned to the ground. The kitchen roof was badly burned but the house was saved by the heroic work of over 100 men who responded to the alarm and formed bucket brigades to bring water from the windmill's storage tank. They also prevented the spread of the fire to the store and Grange Hall, where the roof was on fire several times from embers blown on it.

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Kick Hill Road

By Rick Kane

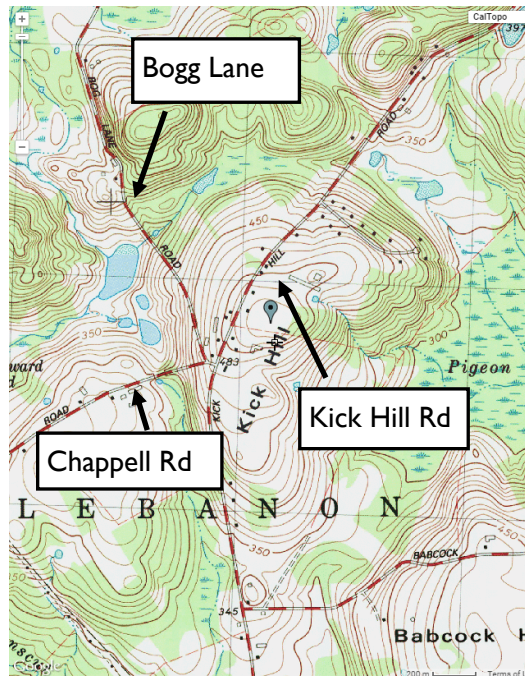
As we continue to identify the source and origin of road names in Lebanon we hope to have more of the families provide the history of road names associated with their ancestors. Anyone who has such information is welcome to send it along and we will include one per issue or as space allows, as we have over the last year or so.

Kick Hill Road runs from Route 207 to South Windham's Machine Shop Hill. Kick Hill Road is so named after "Kick Hill" which is located on the east side of the intersection of Chappell Road, Bogg Lane and Kick Hill Road. It is also at the peak of the road from which it is named. The mystery at present is the origin of the name for the Hill itself.

Kick Hill Road is hand written in the margin of a US Census as early as 1910 alongside the block of families that lived along the road at that time. It is not so for an earlier Census. Unlike other cases such as Babcock Hill, which had members of the Babcock family living in the area of the hill as early as 1770 and for which Babcock Hill Road is named, there is no record of a Kick family living in Lebanon at any time. So the search is on for the origin of Kick Hill.

Kick Hill is not specifically designated on the 1854 map of Lebanon, nor the 1868 F.W. Beers map of Lebanon. So just when it was so named remains unknown at this time. The land records of that time period do not refer to the road other than as the "highway leading from Lebanon Center to South Windham over Kick Hill" and not until about 1945 do land records use the name Kick Hill Road as a boundary designation.

One notable historical data point is from a Lebanon Town meeting of November 23, 1871 when the Selectmen were instructed to grade all hills on the Kick Hill road to 5 % or less, the significant language being the use of the non-capitalized word road which would imply to me that it was not officially named at that time.



Continued from page 6 sidebar
in the school, their thoughts, relationships, successes and failures. It also addresses the founders and the supporters of the school and their expectations as well as their prejudices regarding the students' studies and their behavior. The culture and attitudes of the townspeople and their influence, support, as well as their prejudices are also covered. An especially interesting chapter is entitled "American Paradox: The Indelible Color-line" is devoted to interracial marriages prior to this era and how it is handled during this time and place.

John Demos gives a most in-depth coverage and documentation of the players-students, clergy, local citizenry and folks from afar. The book affords the reader an understanding of trying to build a way to Christianize the world at a local level along with the many trials and tribulations of doing so.

Another great source of information is the Cornwall Historical Society. They have posted information on -line that is very succinct and more general. Maybe a field trip to the Historical Society and Cornwall to view some artifacts, to get a sense of place, and to walk on some of the paths the actors in this story walked might be in order. Indeed, a visit this summer or fall is in my future.

We are currently accepting donations to our Evening at the Museum silent auction. If you have an item(s) or a filled basket that you are interested in donating, please give us a call. All donations must be received by July 1st.

Expand your knowledge of Lebanon's history by adding some of these books to your own library.

- *History of Windham County, v. 1*, by Ellen Larned, reprint
- *Dr. William Beaumont*, by Keith R. Widder
- *Lebanon, three centuries in a Connecticut hilltop town*, by George Milne
- *Lebanon, Images of America Series*, Arcadia Publishing, by Alicia Wayland, Ed Tollmann & Claire Krause
- *Hussars in Lebanon!*, by Robert A. Selig
- *En Avant with our French Allies*, by Robert A. Selig et al.
- *Around the Lebanon Green*, by Alicia Wayland, Photos by Grant Huntington
- *Lebanon Recalled*, by John Sutherland
- *Connecticut Signer: William Williams*, by Bruce P. Stark

These books and more are available in our gift shop. Stop in or call for prices.

The Airline Train/Trail

Continued from page 1

first regularly scheduled passenger train began to run. It made so many stops for passengers and water that it was no faster than the shoreline route. A steamer hit the Connecticut River Bridge on a foggy night and part of the bridge came down, halting operations for several months as repairs were made.

In 1885, the *New England Limited* was started. It ran two trains, one from Boston and one from New York each starting at 3 PM. The powerful engine pulling two plush Pullman cars was able to travel the 213 miles in six hours.

This bettered the shore route by an hour. This time was possible because of the utilization of the first pan trays that were bolted between the tracks. The train would pass through

Putnam and Rowayton at 45 miles per hour and a scoop would be lowered that would draw in from 1500 to 2500 gallons of water.

The train did not stop until it reached Willimantic.

In 1891, the line received new white luxury cars that were trimmed in gold. The interiors were plush velvet and silk. They dressed the engine crew and staff in white. The train was very popular and carried both the wealthy and businessmen between the two cities. When the train passed through the countryside, the

moon shone on the train. This gave it the nickname of the Ghost Train. By 1895, the impossibility of keeping the train clean ended the use of the white cars.

The train had become so popular that it became too heavy for the grades on the route and the Air Line train made its last run in 1902. Other lines did utilize the tracks. The Cannonball Fish Train ran 5 days a week from Boston to New York with cars of only fish. In summer, Peach Trains ran from eastern Connecticut to New Haven and New York.

As the trains got heavier, modifications had to be made to the line. There are two iron trestles in East Hampton. The larger of these, 1000 feet long and 137 feet high, was backfilled with sand.

This was a 20-month project and made it possible for the heavier freight trains to use the tracks.

Many students commuted to the high schools in Willimantic or Middletown on the train. The farmers were able to send their milk, fruits and vegetables to market by train and the mail traveled on the train. The flood of 1955 washed out the bridge in Putnam and the cost of replacing the bridge was too steep. This was the end of the through travel. After this, the railroad soon was abandoned. The property was deeded to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)* in 1975.

The DEP proposed a Linear State Park be developed from the property in 1996. With the help of the DEP, the town, the highway crew, contractors and a large number of volunteers, we now have the beautiful Air Line Trail in our town.

Source: Greg M. Turner & Melancthon W. Jacobus, *Connecticut Railroads: an Illustrated History*.

* Currently known as the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)



The Mystery 1876 Diary

By Rick Kane

A diary from 1876 was found in the rafters of a Goshen Hill home some years ago. The author was unknown as no identification was noted anywhere within the diary. As we read the diary we learn of the weather conditions for each day, we learn of the daily routine of a very well educated young woman and her family and life in 1876 rural Lebanon. But still the mystery of just who was the author remained.

She writes "Father and Mother went to Turnersville," never mentions a first or last name but reverently refers throughout the entire diary as Father and Mother. She mentions local neighbors by last names such as Mrs. McCall or the Starks, many who come to tea or dinner or were members of the sewing society. She was clearly well educated and very well read. She often referred to the library books she was reading and during the colder seasons recounted that she read aloud in the parlor in the evening. And very often quotes from the passages read were included at the bottom of that day's entries.

Many names are mentioned throughout the diary but very few last names, so attempts to identify the author were difficult. But, I believe we finally did identify her as Sarah Thomas, daughter to Peleg and Mary Cady Thomas who indeed did live on what is Goshen Hill Road today down the hill from the intersection of Goshen Hill Road and McCall Road. She was born in 1840 and, therefore, 36 at the time of this diary journal and still single.

The life and times of Sarah Thomas describe a strong, fairly well-to-do family of Goshen Society. They attended church

service every Sunday at the Goshen Congregational Church and attended church meetings in the evening. They went to Norwich frequently, Baltic on occasion and her Father went often to Hartford on business. Peleg Thomas was a prominent citizen of Goshen Society.

Sarah wrote letters and received letters almost daily from relatives, friends and neighbors. One relative in particular, and one who provided the key to the author's identity was Lavinia. Lavinia was only mentioned by her first name, but as it turned out Lavinia was a very prominent citizen of the US in 1876. Lavinia was Rhoda Lavinia

Goodell, Sarah's cousin and the daughter of William Goodell and Clarissa Cutler Cady Goodell (Sarah's mother Mary's older sister). The connection was made through the entries in June 1876 when Sarah traveled to Philadelphia (by way of steamship from New London to Newark, New Jersey and subsequently train to Philadelphia) to attend the International Temperance Convention, where Lavinia was a speaker. Her entire speech as well as the proceedings of the entire Convention are available on Google books – just search "1876 International Temperance Convention". She later came to Lebanon with Sarah in July and delivered the very same speech at the Goshen Congregational Church. Lavinia was the first woman admitted to the Wisconsin Bar and her story is told in the book *Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of America's First Women Lawyers*, by Jill Norgren (2013). In this book are references to letters written to her cousin Sarah Thomas and this was the connection that confirmed the author of our diaries. All else followed as a result.

Following the Temperance Conference she and Lavinia went up to Newark and stayed briefly with the Stewarts (Mother Stewart is a noted Temperance advocate and worth



History Lovers Book Club?

Are you someone who still loves to settle in with a book in the evening or on a rainy day? Do you reach for the latest well-reviewed contemporary fiction, one of the classics of literature or a book investigating some event or person in the past?

Historical Society members have suggested an interest in creating a history lovers book club and we'd like to know if you'd be interested.

Please join us at the Historical Society Museum on

Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 7:00pm for a "let's get started" meeting. We can

discuss logistical topics like meeting dates and times. We can also begin the fun by figuring out how to select books.

Do come with recommendations in mind.

If you are interested but can't come

June 10, please call the Museum at 860-642-6579 to leave your name and contact information. Or call Keith LaPorte at 860-456-3813 for further information.

Mystery 1876 Diary

Continued from page 9

researching on Google) and then on to Green Point, Brooklyn to spend some time with her Aunt Mira (who married John Wheeler Hill), another of her mother's sisters. While in Green Point, she attended a church service where she heard Henry Ward Beecher preach. Henry Ward Beecher was the brother of Connecticut's own Harriet Beecher Stowe. Beecher was a fire and brimstone preacher who is also worth researching.

At this point I would like to point out that once again we learn that Lebanon was not, and is not, the sleepy little rural agricultural town we may think, not now and not then. That many well educated and prominent citizens and their relatives such as Lavinia as well as her father William Goodell, who actually ran for president of the United States in 1852 under the Liberty Party. He also was up for nomination in 1860 and would have then run against President Lincoln but he lost the nomination. Sarah did eventually marry at age 40 to Joseph Miller age 24 but the marriage did not last.

Sarah died in April 1900. She and her family are buried in the Goshen Cemetery.

A transcription of the diary is at the museum.

The Dr. Danielson House

Continued from page 4

Trumbull, further strengthening his ties to his hometown.

Jesse Wright was active in local affairs. Some of his posts include terms as a Justice of the Peace; member of the House of Representatives in the Connecticut legislature; Selectman, 1840-42; Agent for State School Funds; and member of the local School Committee. Jesse Wright died in 1867. His widow, Harriet Williams Wright, evidently continued to live in the house until 1891 when the family sold it to the Danielson family.

Dr. Edwin Lord Danielson, born in 1852

in Danielson, a borough of Killingly, Connecticut, was a graduate of the College of Physicians & Surgeons in New York City. He had practiced four years in East Canaan before moving to Lebanon in 1887, where he probably rented for a few years until moving into this house. Dr. Danielson opened a medical office here and married a local woman, Emma Gay. Dr. Danielson served as the town health officer and medical examiner. He had a large local practice for over 30 years and was greatly mourned when he died in 1918.

Windmills

Continued from page 6

In an interview given by dairy farmer Clayton Williams (1899-1981), recorded in 1978, he recalled that there was already a windmill water system on his farm at 105 West Town Street when his parents moved there about 1902 when he was three years old.

According to Mr. Williams, the windmill tower was 60 to 65 feet tall with the storage tank about 30 feet above ground. The tank stored about 1500 to 2000 gallons of water. A pump was buried underground to keep it from freezing. It was a gravity system that carried the water through pipes laid to the barn and the house when the faucets were turned on.

Other windmills he recalls were at 234 Trumbull Highway in Liberty Hill; the house just to the north of the Baptist Church at 688 Trumbull Highway; the house at 15 West Town Street; the windmill at Redwood; and one at 1035 Trumbull Highway, one mile south of the

Green where it served Wallstone Orchards. The last one still standing is located between the houses at 812 and 820 Trumbull Highway. It is actually on farmland that is part of the McCaw farm at 806 Trumbull Highway. Although the blades or sails are missing, the tower is a striking landmark on the east side of the Green.

With the coming of transmission lines to Lebanon in the 1920s, use of electricity as



Crates from the orchard located at 1035 Trumbull Highway.



Lebanon's First Congregational Church and its meetinghouse

By Donna Baron

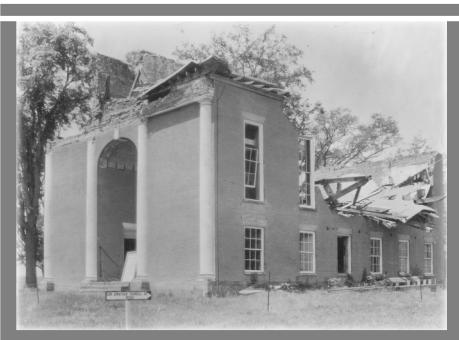
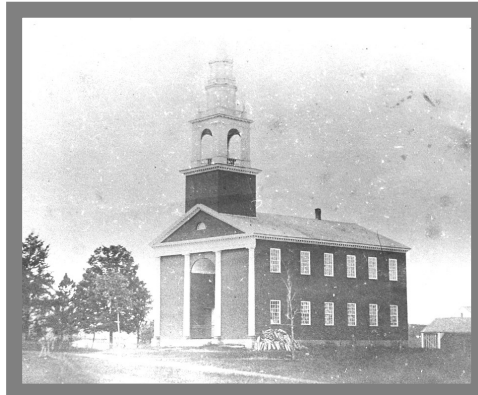
The stately brick meetinghouse stands on the Green, so much a part of everyday life in Lebanon that it can almost be overlooked. A new exhibit at the Historical Society encourages residents and visitors to stop for a few minutes to explore the many ways that the history of this town, the First Congregational Church and the meetinghouse are intertwined. From the time when it was formally organized on November 27, 1700 to today's food bank and ecumenical services, this church has always been a significant part of life in Lebanon.

This connection is traced in detailed hand-written manuscripts, records of the church kept by ministers, deacons, moderators and clerks for more than two hundred years. From the 1706 building of the first proper meetinghouse to the disagreement about where to build a new meetinghouse in 1731, all the ups and downs of church events are described in the records.

The decision to include singing Reverend Isaac Watt's hymns was recorded in 1742. In 1755, Colonel (later Governor) Jonathan Trumbull and others were thanked for their donations of flagons. Twenty-one years later, in 1776 as Lebanon men were leading the new state of Connecticut and marching off to fight in the American Revolution, the church records sadly note the death of pastor Solomon Williams who had served the community for fifty-five years.

Plans to relocate the meetinghouse a mile north and the tearing down of the old meetinghouse led to some of the most bitter notes in the records. This also led to the newly formed Baptist Church a mile north and to the new brick building designed by native-born artist John Trumbull.

In September 1938, when the great hurricane tore through Lebanon and destroyed the meeting house, few recalled historic animosity. The entire community worked together to restore the landmark building.



Details of these and other stories can be investigated in the new exhibit which also describes the church's contemporary mission in town and around the world. The exhibit is open to the public during Museum hours Wednesday through Saturday 12:00pm to 4:00pm or by appointment.

Exhibit News

Current Exhibits

"Always a Pleasure to Hear from Home"
Lebanon and the Civil War

"First Congregational Church of Lebanon"

"Lebanon Doctors"

"Lebanon's History"

"Explore Revolutionary Lebanon"

Our hands-on history room for kids of all ages

UP-COMING EXHIBIT

Learning in Lebanon – the history of education, schools and libraries from 1700 to 2015

Planning and research are currently underway for a new exhibit to open in the mid to late fall 2015.

The exhibit committee is looking for 20th century school-related objects; pictures and objects from Lebanon's one-room schools and information about the history of FFA, Future Housewives of America and other vocational clubs.

Volunteers interested in helping with gallery preparation and exhibit installation are invited to contact the Museum (860-642-6579) or exhibit chair Marianne Freschlin at sonofrollo@earthlink.net

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History Trivia Question: When was the Jonathan Trumbull Library established
and where was its first location? [See page 3 for the answer!](#)

Saturday, July 18, 2015

*Save
the
Date*

Your invitation to

*An Evening
at the Museum*

will be in the mail
in early June.

Please **respond by
July 3** to our
"invitation-only" event.

Advanced
ticket sales only.