



Lebanon Provisions

Vol. 3 No. 2

Winter
2011

The Lebanon Historical Society Newsletter

Events Calendar

All of our programs are open to the public.

Saturday, February 12

10:00am - 12:00pm

Preservation Workshop

Metals: Silver, Pewter,

Brass & Iron

Reservations Required

\$2 Members, \$4 Non-members

Sunday, February 20

2:00pm

Antique Glass

Talk by Noel Tomas of the
Museum of Connecticut Glass

*Bring an antique bottle
to be identified*

Free to Members,

\$2 Non-members

Saturday, March 12

2pm

Underutilized and

**Exceptional Native Trees
and Shrubs**

Program co-sponsored by the
Lebanon Garden Club
Suggested donation \$4

Sunday, March 13

TBA

Maple Sugaring

Free to Members,

\$2 Non-members

**More programs can be
found on page 4**



Elkanah Tisdale: Little-known Artist from Lebanon

By Alicia Wayland

With the 2010 Census completed, state legislatures will now redraw voting districts to reflect how increases or losses in population have changed the number of Congressional representatives apportioned to each state. When the process is manipulated to favor one political party over another, it is called gerrymandering.

The term arose from a satirical cartoon created in 1812 by Elkanah Tisdale, a native Lebanon, Connecticut, artist and engraver who was then living in Boston. Governor Elbridge Gerry's administration enacted a law in 1812 defining new state senatorial districts in Massachusetts. One district was so distorted to favor Gerry's party that it looked like a salamander. Tisdale added claws, wings and fangs to the map and published it in the Boston Weekly Messenger as "THE GERRY-MANDER," thus introducing a new word into American politics.

Tisdale was born in Lebanon on September 20, 1768, the second of twelve children born to his parents Elkanah Tisdale Senior (1745-1809) and Abigail Tisdale. His father served

nine years as Lebanon's town clerk from 1796 to 1805, and he often represented Lebanon in the General Assembly between 1779-1802.

Little is known about Elkanah's education in Lebanon or where he may have studied art. He may have apprenticed as an engraver in New York since his first known plate

appeared in a 1792 history book. In 1794, at age 25, he lists himself as an engraver in

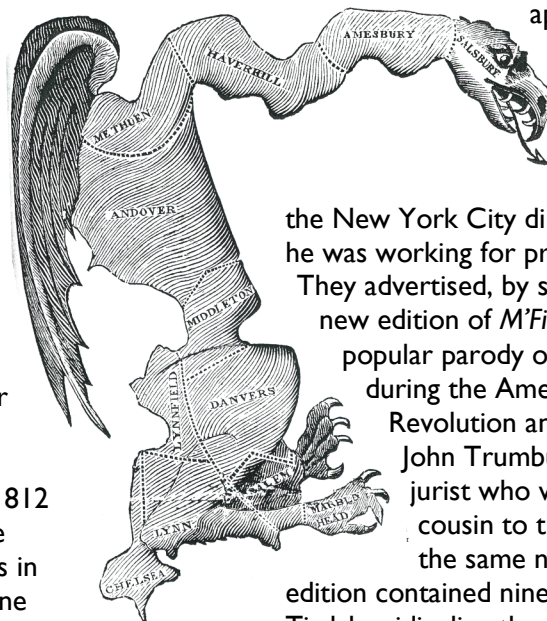
the New York City directory where he was working for printer John Buel.

They advertised, by subscription, a new edition of *M'Fingal*, a very popular parody on the British set during the American

Revolution and written by John Trumbull, a poet and jurist who was a second cousin to the artist with the same name. The new

edition contained nine engravings by Tisdale, ridiculing the British.

Although he illustrated books for other printers, Tisdale evidently never quite mastered the art of engraving, although his designs, executed by other engravers, were masterful and often humorous. In 1798, Tisdale changed his professional directory listing to miniature painting and seems to have been very successful, alternating his studio between Albany and New York. By 1808 he had completed miniatures of the artist



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**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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Donna Baron

From the President

Ed Tollmann

The town Christmas Tree Lighting was a huge success. Our Green couldn't have looked more beautiful. The walkway was outlined with candles as were the paths to our historical buildings and our museum. What a beautiful night it was. Over 300 guests came through the museum. Hands-on activities were enjoyed by children. It was obvious that young people still enjoy doing crafts that

don't require electronics. Mulled cider and ginger snaps were served. It was nice watching guests spending time in the Trumbull Exhibit and reading the panels representing the Lebanon timeline. A big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, without them we never could have handled the crowd.

The south wall on the Beaumont House has been completely replaced. Instead of patching the areas that were bug and water infested it was decided to replace the whole wall. Instead of replacing the sandwiched plywood walls, conventional studding was installed with insulation, a permanent fix. New plastered walls and all new clapboards and trim from top to bottom. Stop by and take a look. Replacing the wall and reconnecting the electricity are two more projects completed this year.

The Buckingham Library move has gained momentum. The sills have been replaced and the foundation stones moved to the museum site. Thanks to a generous donation from the Fortin Foundation the library will now be moved and restored on the museum grounds in the spring.

Our Boy Scout Display has just come down. What a wonderful display it was. I kind of hate to see it go. A display depicting the history of the Goshen Congregational Church will be next. This is the third Lebanon house of worship that we have showcased. Knowing the folks at Goshen Church I'm sure it's going to be an outstanding display.

We're still looking for someone to join our Board of Directors as a member-at-large who will take charge of the Beaumont House. If you are interested please contact our Nominating Chairman, Al Vertefeuille at 860-642-2531.

It's hard to believe that 2010 has come to an end. Many projects have been completed. Family programs, displays, and our Trumbull Exhibit have been enjoyed by many. There is no doubt we are moving forward. The activity is exciting and one cannot fail to feel the momentum when you enter the museum.

My thanks to our staff, our Board of Directors and our volunteers – you're the greatest!

My wish to you all for a happy, prosperous and healthy New Year.



Many thanks to:

**TED's Market
Hebron**

**Big Y
Willimantic**

**Stop & Shop
Willimantic**

**For their generous
donations to our
tree lighting
open house.**

Director's Message

Donna Baron

Lebanon is a special place. Those of you who live here now, or have lived here, know that and each of you has personal reasons for feeling this way. I have been part of the Lebanon community for two years now. Recently I have been thinking about some of the things about Lebanon that make it special for me. Lots of thoughts come to mind, but STORIES top the list.

Lebanon has done an unusually good job of collecting and preserving its stories. When I first started working at the Historical Society, I read two small books *Touring with Henry* and *Recollections of Lebanon's Past*. The Society had published both of these some years ago. The first records the stories that Henry Aspinall shared as he narrated a bus tour through town. The second is a collection of memories of people and events that mattered to Society members. Both are still available at the Museum Gift Shop and both make great winter reading.

Even before printing these books, the Historical Society had invited members to share stories at monthly meetings. Many of these programs were recorded and transcribed. Copies are in a binder in the Museum library. Some members also began recording interviews with people who had lived in town for a long time. The Society still has the tapes and printed transcripts of these interviews. My favorites are Albert Pearce's conversations with Henry Aspinall, which were recorded in 1975. Even in the transcripts I can hear the voices of these two men as one asked questions and the other answered in that distinctly eastern Connecticut voice – a sort of twangy drawl with dropped

consonants and broad "a."

This spring the Historical Society will launch a new story-collecting effort. We hope to host an information session about how to record family or veterans stories and we will arrange a veterans oral history marathon. Please join us!

In the 1990s, as part of a project documenting Lebanon's farming history, many residents were interviewed by John Sutherland and others. The library has both the tapes and transcripts which provided the background for *Lebanon Recalled: Twentieth-Century*

Change in a Connecticut Farming Town. In recent years, Lyman Memorial High School students have participated in a Library of Congress project and videotaped interviews with Lebanon's World War II veterans.

Many stories have been recorded but many more are waiting. This spring the Historical Society will launch a new story-collecting effort. We hope to host an information session about how to record family or veterans stories and we will arrange a veterans oral history marathon. Please join us. Come in and read some of the past interviews; you'll learn a lot about this town. Also, do interview anyone you know who has local stories to tell. If you'd like to learn more about how to do that, give the Historical Society a call. We'd be glad to help.

Welcome to our newest members

Patron

**Dave Goodrich
Janet Reasoner**

Senior

Nancy Godere

Family

Kirk & Lisa Matson

History Trivia Answer:

FIVE

Jonathan Trumbull Sr.,
1769-1784;
Jonathan Trumbull Jr.,
1797-1809;
Clark Bissell,
1847-1849;
Joseph Trumbull,
1849-1850;
William A. Buckingham,
1858-1866

Contact Us:

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Historical Society
856 Trumbull Hwy
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

Wed. and Sat. only
12pm to 4pm
or by appointment.

Upcoming Programs & Events

Saturday, March 19 **Basket Making**

Workshop

10am - 2:30pm

Pre-registration required

\$25 for Members

\$35 for Non-members

Sunday, April 3

"Outlaws, Villains

& Rogues"

2pm

Musical Presentation

by Rick Spencer

Wednesday, May 4

ANNUAL MEETING

& Program

Going It Alone:

Lebanon Since 1804

Presentation by

Alicia Wayland

Be on the lookout
for these programs

Coming this spring!

Veteran's Oral History

Recording Marathon

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

historyoflebanon.org

to see a list of our current
events and programs

We would love to see
you at our programs.
If you have an idea for
a program or you
would be interested in
putting on a program,
please let us know!

Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night...

By Donna Baron and Alicia Wayland

In the twenty-first century, many people complain about the United States Postal Service – mail takes too long to get where it is going, postage is too high, or packages never arrive. When the USPS suggests closing a post office or discontinuing Saturday service, however, most of us worry that we cannot do without it. In Lebanon, as in many rural towns, mail delivery has a long and little-remembered history.

During the colonial period, Lebanon's mail delivery depended on the stage coaches and post riders who used the route through Lebanon as they travelled from Norwich to Hartford.

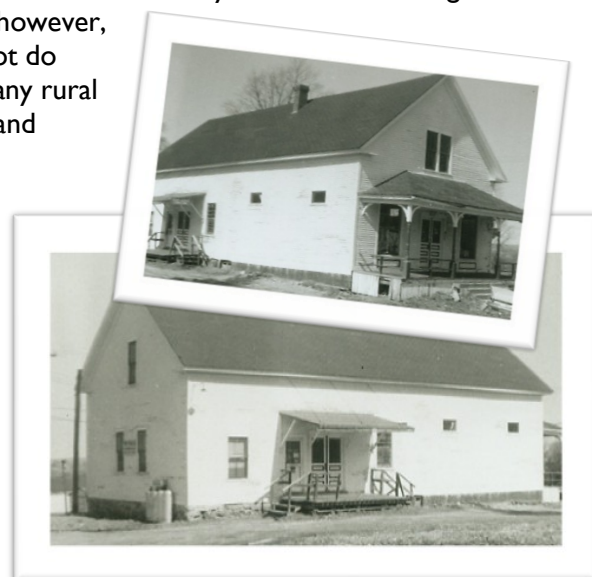
During the 1760s and through the American Revolution, Governor Jonathan Trumbull depended on a group of express riders to carry messages around the state, but mail delivery for ordinary Lebanon residents was a bit haphazard. This changed in 1801, when on August 4, John Taintor was appointed as Lebanon's first postmaster.

The Historical Society archives include a 1975 report from the National Archives that traces the history of post offices and postmasters in Lebanon. At that time twenty-five Lebanon men and women had served as postmaster; some serving separated terms and others moving from acting to confirmed post master. Some of the postmasters, like Charles A. Kingsley, began their careers as rural route carriers.

Lebanon Center post offices were most often in private homes or businesses. At different times both the Grange (the Green Store) and the War Office were used as post offices. At other times one or another of the stores that sat on the Green itself served that purpose. The current brick post office on Route

207 was constructed in 1960. This facility has served all of Lebanon since that date.

However, for many years, Lebanon residents might pick up their mail at Liberty Hill, Leonard Bridge or



*Lebanon Post Office entrance on the west side
of Main's store after 1946*

"Chestnut Hill." In the Historical Society archives there are a series of essays by Paul Wyeth, Lavinia Walsh and Ella R. Barrett that outline the histories of these now-closed facilities. These papers were, apparently, presented together at a Historical Society meeting in 1967.

According to Ella Barrett the first Liberty Hill post office opened in 1834 and received mail three times a week in four-horse coaches from Hartford and Norwich. This post office was located at the store in Liberty Hill and operated until July 1907. When the railroad opened at Chestnut Hill in Columbia, mail arrived there and was transported to Liberty Hill. A post office had opened at the Chestnut Hill station in 1884/5. In July 1907 Eva Dimon accepted appointment as the Chestnut Hill post mistress and operated the post office in her Liberty Hill home, a

Continued on next page 7

Volunteer Update and Thank-you's

Thanks to

Lindy Olewine Brunkhorst,
our wonderful volunteer genealogist,
our family files are filling up with
biographical fact sheets and brief family
outlines. Lindy has just completed
transcribing the probate index
from Columbia.

Thank you Lindy!

We could use your
help in researching
sheet music in
Lebanon's churches.
If you are interested
please give us a call!

Thanks to

Marty Kendall

our genealogy and research library
has been faithfully staffed every
Wednesday and Saturday since the
library opened in 2002. Marty has
been kept very busy as a member
of both the collections committee
and the exhibit committee. Marty
keeps the cataloging of our
collections moving forward.

Thank you Marty!

We can always use
a hand with our
school programs
when schools is
in session...
or with our
vacation programs
when school is out!

Thanks to

Meghan Klein

the museum entrances look beautiful
and welcoming. Often accompanied
by her children, Emily, Abby & Alex,
Meghan brings in armfuls of seasonal
decorations adding special touches
of charm and warmth to greet
our visitors.

Thanks Megan!

Thanks to

Rachal Conley

our newest high school volunteer.
Rachal has been lending a helping hand
setting up and breaking down chairs
for programs and preparing projects
for children's craft programs. Mostly
she works behind the scenes, but you
may have seen her helping out at
the children's craft table at the
tree lighting.

Thank you Rachal!

Thanks to

Vin Shea

Vin has been working with Jim Mello
on a variety of outside tasks like
setting up and breaking down the
tent for our "Evening at the Museum"
event, moving the wagon from storage
to be displayed during nice weather
and helping out with our Second
Saturday event.

Thank you Vin!

Welcome to

Brittany Koziol,

our new Intern from Central
Connecticut State University
who is studying public history.

Brittany will be getting a feel for
museum life while researching and
planning programming relating to
the Trumbull Cemetery.

Exhibit News

What's In

In March a display
and Sunday Talk
about the **Goshen
Community and
the Goshen
Congregational
Church.**

In our changing
exhibit gallery.

**Jonathan Trumbull:
A Merchant Struggling
for Success**

What's Out

Out of the display
cases is our community
display, "**On My
Honor..." Boy Scouting
in Lebanon 1934-2010**

Thanks to all the
members of the
community for lending
their items.

What to Check Out!

✓ Our hands-on
history room.

Teaches both children
and adults about the
Revolutionary War.

✓ Turning the Soil;
The Land and People
of Lebanon
Panels that line our
hallway explores
Lebanon's rich history
from the time of the
Paleo Indians to the
present day.

A Good Read

A Life of the Land: Connecticut's Jewish Farmers

Mary M. Donohue and
Briann G. Greenfield

Volume 4 Fall 2010

Connecticut Jewish History

*The Journal of the Jewish Historical
Society of Greater Hartford*

In the very late 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish families from Eastern Europe began buying the farms that well-established Connecticut families were selling as sons and daughters sought new economic opportunities elsewhere. The five essays and many photos in the book, explore the lives of these "new" farmers and the impact that they had on the agriculture, social life and tourism of eastern Connecticut.

With near-by towns such as Colchester, Bozrah and East Hampton, Lebanon saw a substantial number of Jewish families arrive between 1900 and 1930. Many of these families participated in an oral history project for local farmers that the Historical Society conducted in the 1990s. These oral histories became an important resource for the authors of this book. With lots of photos and stories from Sol Kiotic, Marion Jaffe Major and Harold Liebman, *A Life of the Land* is engaging and easy to read. If you would like to order a copy, call the Historical Society to place an order or stop by our library to take a look.

Mills of Lebanon

By Jacy Worth

For the past 22 years my family and I have lived near bodies of water associated with mills in Lebanon.



Photo of the Hinckley Mill taken sometime in the 1880's.

Courtesy of Ed Tollmann

For the first five years we lived near Stiles pond. Currently we reside on Pease Brook.

My family and I have explored the remains of the mills, old foundations and dams, at these locations. I have found it fascinating to imagine what went on at these sites when they were in full operation. This sparked my interest in the history of mills in our town. Gristmills, sawmills, carding and wool or fulling mills were prevalent in Lebanon from 1700 until they were gradually closed during the 1800 and 1900's. The water that flowed in the rivers and streams was a valuable energy source. People learned to use this water to operate the small mills. Gristmills ground the grain farmers grew by grinding it between two millstones powered by the water wheels. The grinding action broke the grains down in

to flour. Saw mills used the water to power the blades that cut logs into planks. Carding mills processed the wool

sheared from sheep. The action of the mill washed and carded the wool that would then be spun into yarn and woven into cloth. Fulling mills or wool mills used fullers' earth to pound in to the cloth further cleansing it.

The cloth was then hung on tented frames to

stretch it back to the original size.

In 1700 the first mill was built by Joseph Parsons who was the father of Lebanon's first minister. The town allotted him 120 acres in return for the building and operation of a gristmill. It was located just west of the center on what is now route 207. This is the site of the mill near my home. After this period numerous gristmills, sawmills, wool and fulling mills were constructed along the brooks and streams in Lebanon. The mills depended on the freshets in the spring and fall and heavy rains when water was most abundant. This water was held by small dams in millponds. There were usually several mills along a watercourse and the owners had to cooperate with one another in order to get the best use out of this waterpower to turn their mill wheels and turbines.

Continued on insert

Post Office

Continued from page 4

tradition which continued after 1928 when Flora Caples of Liberty Hill became postmistress. In order to simplify the confusion of a postmistress serving in one county and living in another, the existing name of "Chestnut Hill Post Office" was retained until 1966.

According to the National Archives documentation, the Leonard Bridge post office was established in 1892 and Darius Leonard was the first postmaster. In 1922 Anna Strong was named postmistress and ran the post office from her home at the corner of Lake Williams Road and Exeter Road. Rural free delivery service began from Leonard Bridge before Christmas in 1901 and operated until the 1930s when it was consolidated with Lebanon RFD. In her paper Lavinia Walsh referenced a 1901 circular letter from Leonard Bridge postmaster Darius B. Leonard that described the RFD route, the "approved" mail boxes and the difficulties of winter time mail delivery. Perhaps a copy of this circular letter is still in someone's attic. If so, the Historical Society would welcome a chance to make a copy, because, with all the Post Office material in the archives, this is one piece that is not part of the collection.

Tisdale

Continued from page 1

John Trumbull and his wife. Prior to that, he had completed miniatures of two daughters of Jonathan Trumbull Jr., Faith Trumbull Wadsworth and Harriet Trumbull. He also completed a series of satirical drawings to illustrate newspaper articles and other works by the loosely organized writers known as the Connecticut Wits.

In 1812 Elkanah moved to Boston where he is again listed as a miniature painter in that city's directory. He

returned to Connecticut in 1817 where he was a founding partner in the short-lived Hartford Graphic and Bank Note Engraving Company. Tisdale designed the bank notes and miscellaneous items printed by the company. He seems to have been in Lebanon in 1824,

perhaps caring for his aged mother who died in 1825. For a number of years, Elkanah drew illustrations for some of the popular children's books written by "Peter Parley," the pseudonym of Samuel Goodrich.

After about 1825, little is known of



Elkanah and his whereabouts. However, three of Elkanah's brothers lived in Norwich, where two were doctors and one was a merchant. Since Elkanah painted a number of Norwich residents, he may have resided in that city, too. He died in Norwich on May 1, 1835. He was a bachelor and left no descendants.

Although difficult to find, the portraits in miniature are among Tisdale's finest works, while his prolific designs and engravings indicate an artist of intellect and humor, worthy of better recognition in the development of American art than he now receives.

For our scrapbook



During our recent children's program, called Minding your "Ps and "Qs," young ladies learned etiquette, manners... and deportment.

As a follow-up to an article in the last issue of Lebanon Provisions newsletter about volunteers Marge and Bill Jahoda, we would like to make a few clarifications.

In error we wrote, "Bill Jahoda added rooms on his house and received much advice from Bill Buckley on plumbing."

What we should have said was "much advice from Fred Buckley on plumbing."

To keep the record straight we would like to add that prior to teaching in Lebanon for 10 years, Marge taught kindergarten and first grade in Colchester and Baltic and was also a reading tutor in Columbia as well as working as a substitute teacher in the surrounding towns.

In error Jahoda was misspelled in one headline.

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



How many Governors of Connecticut came from Lebanon?

History Trivia Question:

*If you are interested
in sponsoring
the next issue
please contact us
860-642-6579*



Lebanon Historical Society
Museum & Visitor Center
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Lebanon, CT 06249

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If you are interested in leaving a legacy of your own, please visit www.leavealegacyct.org or contact the Lebanon Historical Society.

Introducing our new logo!

***Designed by Laura Moorehead
from Angell House Design***

Lebanon Historical Society
MUSEUM & VISITORS CENTER