



Vol. 8 No. 1

Winter 2015

Provisions

Newsletter for the Lebanon Historical Society



Calendar Of Events

All programs are open to the public

Sunday, November 29
1:30pm or 2:30 pm

Holiday Door Spray-making Workshop

Fun for the whole family.
Choose one of two sessions.
Materials fee is \$5 per spray.

Non-members pay
an additional \$3.

Pre-registration required



Sunday, December 6
6:30pm – 8pm

Lebanon Tree Lighting Open House & Exhibit Preview

Enjoy warm mulled cider and
gingerbread cookies while kids
make special holiday crafts.
Preview of our newest exhibit.
Tour the Pastor's Library and
the Beaumont House.



Sunday, January 24
2pm

"Exhibits Opening Reception"

**"How They Learned:
Education in Lebanon
1700-1970" and
"Lebanon Fifty Years Ago"**
Refreshments served



Sunday, February 21
2pm

"The Origins of Connecticut Town Government"

Speaker Bruce Clouette
Members free

More Events on Page 4

Learning to read and write in colonial times

By Alicia Wayland

The Puritan ethic that influenced the early settlers placed a strong emphasis on education and learning. Protestants believed that all people, even children, suffered from original sin and must be converted in order to attain salvation. Conversion came about by intensive study of the Bible, which each person must be able to read and study since the Bible was the guide to salvation.

Following the lead of Massachusetts, which had compiled its first code of laws in 1641, subsequently revised until finally published in 1648, Connecticut published a codification of its laws in 1650, bringing together for all to know the laws passed since the establishment of colonial government in 1636.

The section on education included laws on the proper education of children. Every parent must teach his child the "English tongue" and the capital laws of the colony. Additionally, every child was to receive training in husbandry or some lawful occupation. The well-known reference to "that old deluder Sathan" keeping men from the knowledge of the Scripture is included in the section requiring any town with fifty households to establish a school to teach every child to read and write. Any town with a hundred households must establish a grammar school to prepare boys to attend Harvard College.

The first known school in Connecticut was opened in Hartford in 1636 by John Higginson. The same year records of



Horn book

New Haven colony indicate a school teacher was hired. But records of the establishment of schools in the various towns are hard to come by.

What is known is what books were used to teach the children to read and write. The horn book was the first book for the younger children. It consisted of a thin paddle of wood with a handle, and with a sheet of paper attached to it. The paper was protected by a thin sheet of transparent animal horn. The paper had the alphabet, both capital and small letters, at the top, next, a series of syllables, followed by the invocation and the Lord's Prayer. From there they progressed to the primer, which originally meant a book of prayer, the psalter or Book of Psalms, the New Testament and the Bible. The three

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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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Alicia Wayland

Museum Director

Donna Baron

From the President

Glenn Pianka

It is so wonderful when plans all seemingly come together at the same time. On Saturday November 7th, the Eagle Scout project behind the Beaumont House was completed. That project is a reproduction of Lebanon's only remaining hearse house which is at the Exeter Cemetery on Rte. 207. I spent six weekends mentoring and working alongside the Eagle Scout candidate, Connor Montgomery, in his quest to attain the coveted honor. It was a distinct pleasure.

Just in front of it stands the Beaumont House: chimney and new window sash now back in place, the interior freshly painted and awaiting the furnishings, and the equipment to build the last section of stonewall and walkway are poised to start. Behind all of this is the newly graded and planted open area completed by Wentworth Construction. Green blades of new grass can be seen in this mild weather.

Back at the main campus I see that the patio furniture has been put away and the driveways are outlined with the seasonal curb indicators. Inside the staff is busily preparing for the next exhibit. On October 24, the board spent a full day with strategic planning in that the future of our fine organization is mapped out. And so goes the concert of progress.....it is such a sweet melody !!!! Happy holiday season to all our members and friends. Please try to remember all of the good work being done when you receive your annual appeal letter soon to come



Holiday Open House, December 6th at 6pm

Visit the Historical Society after the Lebanon Christmas tree lighting to preview new exhibits, enjoy cider and homemade gingerbread men, visit the Pastor's Library Victorian Christmas display and make your own holiday ornament. Please join the Board, staff and volunteers of the Lebanon Historical Society as we launch the celebration of our 50th year.

Lighted luminaria will lead you to the front door of the Beaumont House for a first glimpse since the building closed in 2013 in preparation for its move across the Green. Historical Society volunteers

will show you around the newly refurbished space and tell about plans for the future. Though the Beaumont family probably did not celebrate Christmas, they undoubtedly welcomed friends and extended family into their home at Thanksgiving and New Year's. We hope that you will help us continue that tradition and stop by to visit on December 6th.

In 1861, Reverend Hine and the members of the First Congregational Church decorated the first public Christmas tree in Lebanon and hosted a party at the Town Hall. The Historical

Continued on page 3

Director's Message

Donna Baron

On a recent afternoon, a small group of longtime Lebanon residents met at the Historical Society Museum. Some had grown up in town, while others moved here years ago and raised their own families in town. This group gathered to share their thoughts about Lebanon fifty years ago, during the 1960s and early 1970s. Their goal was to discover themes that could be used to plan an exhibit celebrating the Lebanon Historical Society's fiftieth anniversary.

Stories and memories flew back and forth across the table. School and church, 4H and Scouts, cars and fashions, shopping and movies in Willimantic. But the theme that came out most clearly was a sense of community and the importance of people. As a fascinated observer, I was totally captivated by the stories and the sense of community around the table.

"You went to school with the same classmates for 12 years," one participant commented. "These classmates became your life-long friends." People helped each other in good times and bad. Families borrowed farm equipment from one another and helped on each other's farms. Fifty years ago, everyone knew each other. Family cars reduced the distance between different parts of town. Although people's homes were spread out, everyone got together at church, the schools, at sports events and at the Fair.

In the middle of this reminiscing, someone observed that with all the changes of the last fifty years, there is a lot of that old sense of community in Lebanon. This is a large part of what makes Lebanon a special place to live and work today. The meeting broke up – rather reluctantly – as participants headed off to start collecting objects that help explain life in Lebanon in the 1960s.



Society carries on that tradition with a Victorian Christmas at the Pastor's Library. Candle light and a fire in the wood-burning stove will set a festive atmosphere for all who stop by.

Take a few minutes to step back in time to the days just after the Civil War when Christmas celebrations were still new to Lebanon.

In the Historical Society Museum, guests are encouraged to try some of our hot mulled cider and ginger cookies, the perfect treat if the night is cold and windy. Our younger guests will enjoy the chance to make a holiday ornament to take home. Our craft is recommended for ages 5 to 10, but younger and older crafters are welcome. Christmas music will coax visitors

down the long hallway to preview our new exhibit "How They Learned: Education in Lebanon, 1700-1970." Come and explore Lebanon's long tradition of excellence in its schools and libraries as you look for family and friends in the many photographs throughout the gallery.

Whether you stop in for a few moments to warm up on a chilly night or linger for half an hour or more, we look forward to chatting with many of our visitors. If you have friends or neighbors who are not familiar with the Historical Society, our holiday open house is a wonderful time to invite them to join you at the Museum. ***Please come and help us celebrate the holidays and our 50th anniversary.***



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Family

Tom & Deb Boisvert
of Lebanon

Steven & Susan Hogan
of Lebanon

Individual

Cecily Cone Kelly
of Texas

Denise Graguela
of US Virgin Islands

Senior

Anita Mokoid
of Columbia

Trivia Answer:

Between 1878 and 1885, Asher P. Smith, owner of Redwood, subdivided his orchard along W. Town St. into four house lots and the store lot, including 909 and 905 Trumbull Hwy, and 209, 203, and 199 W. Town St.

The buildings were all designed in Victorian styles.

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

Research Library
by appointment.

Calendar Of Events



non-members \$2
Refreshments served

Sunday, March 13

1pm — 4pm

Antique Appraisal Day

\$5 per item, \$12 for 3 items



Sunday, April 10 or 17 (tbd)

2pm

“Puzzle Jug, Mug & Bowl”

Presenter Rick Hamlin,
historical potter

Members free,
non-members \$2

Refreshments served



Sunday, May 1

4pm

50th Anniversary

Annual Meeting

“Remembering Our Past”

Refreshments



Saturday, June 11

10 am — 3pm

“Second Saturday”

Our free fun-filled family day.

Antique truck rides,
craft demonstrations,
hands-on activities too!

Free event



Sunday, June 26

2pm

**“History of Stepfamilies
in Early America**

Author Lisa Wilson

Members free,
non-members \$2

Refreshments served

Lebanon’s Soldier Poet, Stephen Tilden

By Alicia Wayland

Stephen Tilden, born in Scituate, Massachusetts, in 1689, moved with his family to Lebanon about 1700. Lebanon’s first militia was organized in 1702, the same year that saw the outbreak of Queen Anne’s War. Lebanon was required to furnish nine men for the 1709 campaign. There are no muster rolls from Queen Anne’s War that we know of but historians know of other evidence that Steven Tilden, Lebanon’s soldier poet, was one of those who served before the war finally concluded in 1713.

Stephen Tilden’s father, also named Stephen Tilden (1664?-1727), was a weaver and a blacksmith. Stephen, the son, learned neither of these trades. Instead, he became a lawyer and also a farmer. The law was often the stepping stone to political office for aspiring lawyers but if Stephen wanted to take a step like this, his marital woes would have ruined his reputation. Stephen married his first wife, Sarah Root, in March 1711-12. She died a few years later after giving birth to three children.

His second wife was Mary Bewel (Buel), whom he married in 1716. Mary gave birth to several children. Then, in 1732, Mary wrote to the pastor of her church, the First Church of Lebanon, about her husband, saying “I do believe he had committed ye sin of fornication [sic] with Sarah Ellis.” Mary refused to live with her husband, although a church committee formed to advise her, regarded this as a failure of her duty. The recriminations went back and forth for two years when Mary finally left town for good and successfully obtained a divorce on the grounds of adultery in 1734.

Many years later Stephen Tilden married his third wife Judith or Judah Peirce in 1761.

There were other wars following Queen Anne’s War but the French and Indian War was the final and decisive war in the Anglo-French struggle for North America. From 1754 to 1763, the war rolls show that over 350 men from Lebanon served in the various campaigns.

Before the Lebanon soldiers left town for their first campaign in April 1755, they gathered to hear a “lecture” by the Rev. Solomon Williams. The soldiers included two of Stephen Tilden’s own sons. Stephen was there also and he gave the soldiers one of his poems printed as a broadside. He intended the poem as an encouragement to the soldiers and it was common practice in those days for such poems to be sung to popular tunes as morale builders while the soldiers sat around their campfires. The poem was so well received that Stephen Tilden had nine of his other war poems printed as a pamphlet at his own expense and given to the soldiers who left for the Crown Point campaign in 1756.

When the war concluded, Stephen had his poems printed in a book, titled *Tilden’s Miscellaneous Poems*, printed and sold by Timothy Green, a well-known printer in New London. Many of these poems he signed “by an old American soldier.” Eventually there were three editions of the book issued, each one containing poems already printed and new ones he added to each edition.

Continued on page 11

Voices Worth Remembering —a very special collection

By Donna Baron

In the 1960s, shortly after founding the Lebanon Historical Society, members began interviewing longtime residents and well-known local story tellers. Fifty years ago, these conversations were often presented as public programs where tales of bygone days were recounted in front of an audience

and recorded for posterity. In recognizing the

importance of capturing memories, the Lebanon Historical Society participated in a new kind of history. This study focused on the experiences of ordinary people within the context of larger events. Historical Society members became “oral historians.”

According to the Oral History Association, “*Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.*”

The oral history collection at the Lebanon Historical Society includes both recordings and transcriptions. Some date back to the early years of the Society when Henry Aspinall and others recalled life years before. The collection also includes a series of oral histories collected by John Sutherland in the late

1990s. These interviews with Lebanon farming families provided the basis for Mr. Sutherland’s book *Lebanon Recalled: Twentieth-Century Change in a Connecticut Farming Community* and were an important source for *A Life of the Land: Connecticut’s Jewish Farmers* by Mary



“...Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern...”

Donohue and Briann Greenfield. More recently, the Historical Society partnered with students at Lyman Memorial High School and instructor John Motyka to add Lebanon voices to the Veterans History Project at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.

Society members are encouraged to visit our library and enjoy reading the transcriptions of these histories. Our future plans for the collection include migrating old recordings to more stable modern media so that the actual voices of residents are preserved. We also hope to encourage our members to interview and record oral histories. Please contact the Museum if you are interested in participating. We can help with developing interview questions and recording techniques as well as providing a safe secure repository for new oral histories.

The oral histories in our collection appear in the sidebars on this page and on page 11.

Early Oral Histories

Henry Aspinall,
*his life, early industry,
Rte 207 & Trumbull Cemetery,
the broom shop, one room
schools from 1900-1937,
farming in Lebanon from
1900-1960, special tour*

Louise Standish &
Jack DeLozier,
the Clark house

Martha Kendall &
Henry Aspinall,
Lebanon cemeteries

Irving Kiotic,
*History of Jewish people
in Lebanon*

Barbara Brown,
Early slavery in Lebanon

Mary Slate,
events of her early life

Imogene Tarcuauu
& Arlene McCaw,
Lebanon history

Clarence Geer,
Liberty Hill Church

Henry Aspinall,
Clayton & Flora Williams,
Recollections

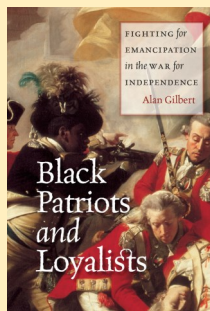
Clayton Williams,
*Recitations as community
entertainment*

Clara Schachinger &
Claire Krause,
Village Hill

Craig Rowley,
*Restoration of
Trumbull Jr. House*

A Good Read

By Betty Forrest



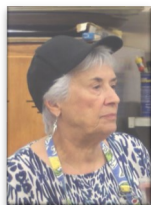
Black Patriots and Loyalists

By Alan Gilbert

Black Patriots and Loyalists is a book about fighting for black slave emancipation while fighting the War for Independence, a condition that I personally have given little thought to. I don't recall my high school history classes covering this phenomenon. Rather the topic of slavery was centered mainly on the Civil War. I surmise that I am not the only one that had this experience.

The effort to achieve independence for the thirteen colonies from England and the effort to achieve emancipation of American slaves were complicated. The history of slave revolts begins in the Caribbean in the 1600s. Alan Gilbert considers the slave owners' reactions and beliefs, the colonial slave laws, slave testimonies and the strategies of both England and the Patriots to use enslaved people to further their own cause. The British Empire abolished the slave trade in 1807 and slavery in 1833. However, early abolition efforts began at the same time as the colonies and England were going head to head. Thus, the issues of emancipation and independence were

Continued on page 7 sidebar



"IN THE KITCHEN"

By Sandie Chalifoux

Saturday, September 26th, 2015
-Lebanon Congregation Church, Lebanon

The morning came really fast, had to be in Lebanon by 7:00 am., to start the preparation of food, scrumptious clam chowder, corn chowder, ham and turkey sandwiches, desserts, etc. to be served to the hungry guests that would be attending the Annual Lebanon Historical Society's Antique Show. It was a glorious, bright sunny day with fall in the air, and on the Lebanon Green, no better place to be!

I arrived with some trepidation, as I had never worked on the food prep for the

antique show. Even though I had lived in Lebanon for 55 years, I did not know any of my co-workers with the exception of Leigh Ruckdeschel. Entered the kitchen, and met Tom & Deb

Boisvert, Emily Smith, Kathryn Sanborn, Dwight Worthington, and Leigh arrived with her son Brendan and his friend



Andrew Zemantic.

Emily, Kathryn, Dwight, Brendan and Andrew are in the eighteen/nineteen age bracket. These five young adults, were ready for the job at hand.

No matter what was asked of them, they did it with smiles on their faces. We peeled and cubed 10 lbs. of potatoes; peeled and cut up onions etc.; (under Tom's expertise) we began creating the chowders, then the freshly sliced meats, cheese and rolls, arrived. Emily, Kathryn and Dwight set up a line and created the sandwiches, condiments, sliced native tomatoes, crispy lettuce, to accompany the sandwiches. Sans any advice from "the older folks." At the same time Leigh, Brendan and Andrew created the huge dessert table, slicing and plating the homemade pies, cakes, and cookies that were donated by Lebanon's "celebrated cooks" for the event.

Everything was ready and the hungry folks began entering the Fellowship Hall to sate their appetites. Emily and Kathryn ladled

out the cups of chowder, 10 gallons of clam and 10 gallons of corn, to all the hungry folks eager to have lunch, or supply them with sandwiches and drinks. They never stopped, until there was not any chowder left to be

To all our wonderful volunteers
who work so hard and made
this year's Antiques Show
a great success!



And we will see you next year!
~Jacy & Keith "Tallyho!"



Continued from page 6 sidebar
inextricably linked. Fearing British plans to free some slaves, white colonists joined the Patriot cause. Tempted by promises of freedom many black slaves sided with the Loyalists' cause.

In 1775, Virginia's royal governor, the fourth earl of Dunmore, issued a proclamation decreeing martial law and declaring "all indentured Servants, Negroes, or others free, that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining his Majesty's Troops." This proclamation both encouraged slaves to revolt and to escape without repercussions from the colonists and allowed them to become British soldiers. The Patriots responded in kind, allowing the slaves to join their side in return for their freedom. The book goes on to report what the soldiers' responsibilities and duties were, and about how many black troops there were on each side.

Black Patriots and Loyalists gives an in depth look at the intricacies of the strategies-politically, socially, morally, and militarily- of the times and circumstances in the years around the War of Independence. It explores some of the feelings of slave and master, abolitionists, sailors, artisans, and poor whites. It also addresses actions our own state of Connecticut took during this time.

This book is worth a read, or at least a look-see, to further an understanding of the Revolutionary War, world events of the times, and the struggles of an enslaved people.

served. On the other side, were Brendan and Andrew assisting Linda Heatherly as cashiers. What a day we had, we worked hard, but there was a comraderie between everyone in that kitchen. You just had to be there and experience it.

I personally have thanked these young people for their help, but just want to acknowledge them publicly. After working in the Lebanon school system for twenty years, I always knew that we had great "kids." People are so quick to say, "oh these kids today." But we have the cream of the crop here in Lebanon, and it was such a joy working and spending the day with them.

Thank you, thank you!!!

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.

Sarah Thomas Diary Part II

By Rick Kane



Final chapter in the Sarah Thomas Diary series which began in the summer and fall issues of Provisions.

The DOWES were new residents of Norwich in 1874 as they do not appear in the 1870 US Census as living in Norwich. A search for Francis E. Dowe provides no clue as to where he was in 1870 or for that matter any time prior to 1880. A search for Francis E. Dow, however, provides a single male living in Heathsville Virginia in 1870 – correct age difference, so possibly the same Mr. Dow. There were several other diary entries of letters received and being sent to Miss Howland, Miss Smith and Miss Holley. Searches in US census records for 1870 and 1880 yield far too many of each of these last names all over the US and with very little other vital information to narrow the search, it is impossible to identify who these people are.

An absolute stroke of luck resulted from a google search of Heathsville, Virginia. A Wikipedia hit reads as follows:

“The [Heathsville Historic District](#), [Coan Baptist Church](#), [Howland Chapel School](#), [Kirkland Grove Campground](#), [Rice's Hotel](#), [Oakley, St. Stephen's Church](#), [Sunnyside](#), and [The Academy](#) are listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#).^[2]”

A click on “The Howland Chapel School” opened an entire new point in history following the Civil War.

An email to the Northumberland County Historical Society (Heathsville is located in Northumberland County) inquiring about the possibility of Sarah Thomas having been a teacher at the school resulted in a return phone call with a very simple comment “we know all about your Miss Thomas and Mr. Dowe!” So we were very lucky to discover her whereabouts in the missing years.

There were three schools established in the late 1860s for the children of freedmen in

Northumberland County and Mr. Dowe was involved in the administration of the Stebbins School. He met his future wife, the former Emma Hallam of Philadelphia, who was a teacher at the school. Sarah was teaching at the Holley School in 1870. We have obtained copies of ‘Teachers Monthly School Reports’ for the months of April and June 1870, completed and signed by Sarah Thomas. I do believe that Sarah is also responsible for the DOWES eventually residing in Norwich in the mid-1870s where they owned and operated a ‘Fancy goods’ store.

The Lebanon Historical Society (LHS) has become a member of the Northumberland County Historical Society (NHS) and they in turn a member of LHS. NHS also publishes an annual document with a collection of historical articles pertaining to Northumberland County, similar to our “Provisions.” We have obtained the last 6 years. Each year has an article about the Freedman schools by Dr. Cherry Baylor of Long Island who is a descendant of an attendee of these schools. These articles tell the story of very special women who gave their time and resources to establish and fund education to former slaves and their children and make a difference in the post-Civil War era.

Sarah Thomas not only taught at the Holley school, I have reason to believe she influenced wealthy individuals from Norwich to contribute books and funding for the schools. Two individuals are mentioned in Dr. Baylor’s articles: 50 bibles were donated by William Buckingham and funding was provided by John Fox Slater.

It is my understanding that Sarah did eventually return to Virginia to teach again in the early 1880s. Lebanon can be proud of the contribution of Sarah Thomas to the education of freed men and their families.



Spafford Drive

By Rick Kane and Jonica and Russ Blakeslee

Spafford Drive runs from Route 207/ Exeter Road to Deepwood Drive that runs along the eastern rim of Amston Lake. It was part of a farm owned by John Avery Spafford. In 1868, Amston Lake was known as North Pond and was part of Hebron, Colchester and Lebanon. Phineas W. Turner owned much of the land in the Hebron area around the lake. It was eventually sold to Charles Ams and what was once known as Turnersville became Amston and North Pond, Amston Lake.

A large tract of land in the Spafford family around North Pond goes back to the Porter family. It was noted in the book 'History of New London County, Connecticut' that Henry Augustus Spafford married Mary Elizabeth Porter in 1853. She 'was a descendant of John Porter, an Englishman, who settled in Lebanon, Conn., at an early day. He had three sons, one of whom was John, who settled at Exeter, Lebanon, Conn., on a large tract of land near the North Pond.' Mary lived into the early 1900s and lived with her son John Avery Spafford in Bridgeport, Conn., and his wife Edith, until her death in 1915. The property passed to John Avery Porter and he in turn passed

parcels to his wife Edith. Edith in turn passed the property to their daughter.

John Avery Spafford and his wife Edith's daughter Helen married Frank Grabber, and they had a daughter Jonica.

Unfortunately, Frank died young and Helen subsequently married Richard Cummings (a former Lebanon First Selectman) in 1939. Jonica, we all know as Jonica Blakeslee, having married Russ Blakeslee, was the provider of much of this information.

Viewing a 1957 Connecticut Department of Transportation Map shows no Spafford Drive and that Deepwood Drive ended at about where Woodland Drive is today (there was no Woodland Drive in 1957).

In June 1970, Helen donated a part of the farm land to the town of Lebanon, in order to provide access to Amston Lake. The land records read "a certain tract of land for highway purposes known as Spafford Road and bounded and described as follows:-----" So at the time prior to the transfer it was a private road but already identified as the Spafford Road, for the obvious reason it was on Spafford property.

As we continue to identify the source and origin of road names in Lebanon we hope to have more 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.



To all of our generous volunteers who have given their time and talents to benefit the Lebanon Historical Society during the year.

We are flourishing because of you!

Reading and talking about history for the fun of it!



Please join us for the Lebanon Historical Society history book club.

This informal group of readers meets every other month after reading an agreed-upon non-fiction book about a historical event, period or idea.

As a newly-formed group, we invite you to join us as we select books and share our thoughts and reactions in open and engaging conversation. Each meeting features refreshments are themed to the time period and/or topic of the book we've read.

Look for book and meeting date announcements in *Lebanon Life*, on our website and Facebook page or by email. If you would like to be added to an advanced notice book club email list, please contact the Museum with your email address.

For more information call the museum 860-642-6579

The “What’s it” on the Patio



This is an armillary or armillary sphere invented by the ancient Greeks as models for teaching astronomy. The rings show the positions of important circles of the celestial sphere, including the horizon, meridian, Equator, tropics, polar circles, and an ecliptic hoop. It was also used as a navigational device until the 1600s when it was superseded by the telescope. An armillary can be small for use inside buildings but usually, like this one, is designed for display in a garden or lawn. When correctly aimed, it points to Polaris, the North Star. The armillary was donated by Hugh Trumbull Adams, the Society’s benefactor, and is dedicated to Dolly Randall and Carolyn Wentworth for their support for the Jonathan Trumbull Library, which he built for the town.

Learning to read and write in colonial times

Continued from page 1

latter books were usually studied in elementary school.

Young children were taught in Dame schools, dame referring to a woman who would take the children into her home and teach them the rudiments of reading and writing. Few girls were taught to write since they didn’t need it for employment outside the home. Boys learned to write primarily so they could learn arithmetic, both of which they could utilize in basic business transactions.

The grammar school followed elementary school. Grammar school always meant the Latin grammar school where boys were prepared for entrance to college. The curriculum focused on Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

The settlers of Lebanon in the 1690s came from towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut so they were fully immersed in the Puritan culture. Dame schools were private so there is little public record of their existence, but they undoubtedly

part of the 18th century.

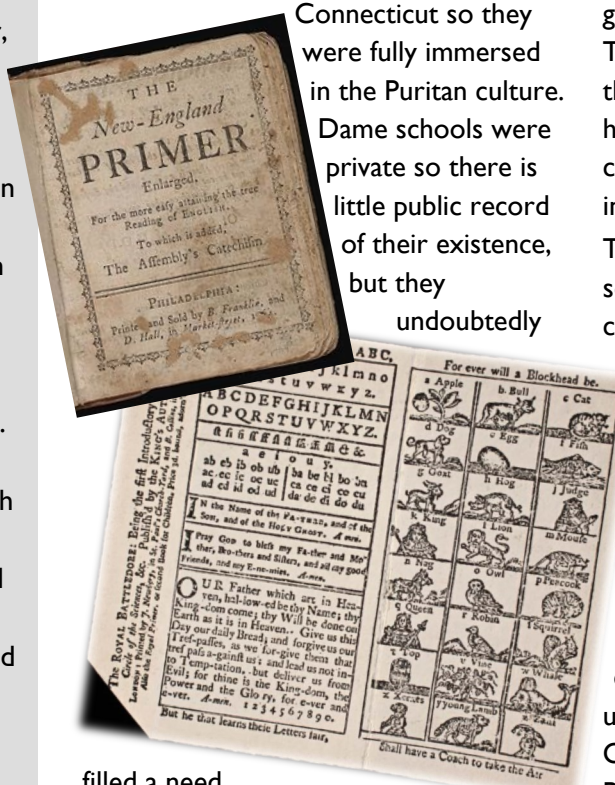
There is no record of when or where the town set up its first school. In 1717, records show the town voted to set up two schools, and the following year they approved several more schools in outlying districts. There is no indication of where they were located. In 1740, the South Society approved a year-round grammar school.

Two private schools became renowned far beyond Lebanon’s borders. In 1743, the Tisdale School was built near the present Town Hall. The school was a subscription school founded by Jonathan Trumbull and several other townspeople to provide a quality education for tuition-paying students.

The school was named after its most famous master, Nathan Tisdale (1732-1787), a Lebanon native and Harvard graduate. After receiving his degree, Tisdale returned home and was hired as the schoolmaster, a position he held until his death. Tisdale taught the standard classical curriculum, and added courses in surveying and navigation. Tisdale was a brilliant teacher and the school attracted students from other colonies and the West Indies. Most of the students were boys, but girls were also admitted.

In the North or Crank Society, the Rev. Eleazer Wheelock conducted a school for college-bound boys in his home. Here Samson Occom, a Mohegan Indian who had been converted during the Great Awakening, came for further education. He studied under Wheelock from 1743 to 1748. Occom was ordained by the Suffolk Presbytery on Long Island, the first Mohegan to become an ordained minister.

Continued on page 11



filled a need.

Reminiscences provide most of the information regarding them but most of the Lebanon memoirs are for the latter

Learning to read and write in colonial times

Continued from page 10

Occom's success inspired Wheelock to open a school for Indian children, whom he hoped to train as missionaries. The school opened in 1754 and was called Moor's Indian Charity School after the benefactor who donated a building and land. Wheelock trained both whites and Indians as missionaries.

In 1769 Wheelock moved the school to Hanover, New Hampshire, where he opened an Indian school and also a new college. He named the college Dartmouth, after the Earl of Dartmouth, a generous contributor to the fund-raising campaign Occom had

conducted in England on behalf of the Indian School in Lebanon. Wheelock was the founder and first president of Dartmouth College.

In spite of their renown, only the Tisdale School appears to have broadened its curriculum past the strait-laced religious-oriented curriculum of the early schools. It was the introduction of the speller, which replaced the primer as the prime reading text, during the mid-18th century, that began the movement to a more varied and secular curriculum. It was not until the Revolution that a more academic, rather than religious, direction became evident in the schools.

Stephen Tilden

Continued from page 4

During the bad depression that followed the French and Indian War, taxes were extremely high, bringing hardships to farmers who were land rich but cash poor. Stephen Tilden's oldest son, also named Stephen, emigrated, along with many other Lebanon men, to upper New York state where land and taxes were cheaper. The next son Daniel stayed home and took over the farm as his father's health failed. Stephen Tilden died on November 27, 1770, at the age of 81. He is buried in the family plot in the burying ground now known as the Trumbull Cemetery on Exeter Road.

His epitaph reads:

*Here rests ye civilian [lawyer],
Historian,
poet and facetious companion.
He delighted in the productions of
men of wit and learning, was
slave to no sect, but ador'd*

ye Deity with his understanding.

*His exit was made with the
utmost Calmness and Resignation.*

Stephen Tilden's poetry is unread today. He was among many amateur versifiers who enjoyed writing poems for their own satisfaction and to amuse friends and family. But the bad rhymes, awkward meters, lack of originality, sentimentality and over-use of common expressions make the amateurs' poems difficult to read and comprehend today. Yet, Stephen Tilden's poems did get published, as did those of Martha Brewster of Lebanon, whose amateur poems were also published (more on her in a future article). But there is no denying the genuine feelings of thanksgiving and optimism of the poets, and the historical value of these rare books that provide another aspect of the rich culture of Lebanon for our generation to learn from.

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History Trivia Question: Where is the section of town known as Victorian Row located? [See page 3 for the answer.](#)



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