



Vol. 10 No. 1

Winter 2017

# Provisions

Newsletter for the Lebanon Historical Society

## Programs & Events

Unless noted  
our programs and events  
are open to the public and  
are held at the museum

- **Sunday, December 3** •  
**6pm to 8pm**

### Lebanon Tree Lighting & Open House

Enjoy warm mulled cider and  
ginger cookies by the fire  
while kids make holiday crafts.  
View our latest exhibits and  
take a lantern tour of the  
Beaumont House and  
Pastor's Library

- **Wednesday, January 10** •  
**7pm**

### History Book Club

*"Thirty-Eight:  
The Hurricane That  
Transformed New England"*  
by Stephen Long

- **Sunday, March 18** •  
**2 pm**

### CT Beer Making

Talk on the history and  
present state of brewing  
in Connecticut  
followed by a tasting.  
\$5 admission  
members & non-members

**Events continued on Page 4**

## A 21st Century Twist on the Traditional Family Farm

By Donna Baron

Farming has  
provided a major  
part of Lebanon's  
economy since the  
town's founding.



Above:  
Nursery stock  
ready to ship.



Left:  
Acres of grow  
houses on Prides  
property.

Over time, agriculture changed from  
raising livestock to mixed crops and  
dairying and then orchards and truck and  
chicken farms. In 1979, a new kind of  
farming came to Lebanon with the  
opening of Prides Corner Farms. With  
a business model of raising nursery  
plants for wholesale to garden and home  
improvement centers and landscapers  
and partnering with their customers  
to solve problems, Prides Corner has  
become an important part of Lebanon's  
agricultural history.

Darien, CT resident, Peter Sellow had  
left his New York City publishing job  
and bought a small property in  
Washington, CT where he started a tree  
farm and raised nursery stock. In 1977,  
he bought a 70 acre property in Lebanon  
with hydroponic tomato growing  
greenhouses from the Gaucher family.

After a year or two, woody ornamentals  
such as rhododendrons and azaleas  
began to replace the tomatoes as the  
core crop. Mark, a graduate of Cornell  
University with a degree in horticulture  
and botany, joined his father in 1980.  
Vegetable growing was left behind and  
Prides Corner moved forward into the  
wholesale nursery business with about  
five employees, five acres of plant  
material and a couple hundred thousand  
dollars in annual sales.

The 1980s were difficult years as the  
Sellow family struggled to train and  
retain a talented pool of employees.  
With a goal of being "an employer of  
choice," Mark is proud that many of the  
early employees and their families still  
work on the farm. Today, Prides Corner

**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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## From the President

Rick Kane

The Society continues to be active in improvements and additions to our campus grounds and also our mission to provide quality Lebanon History programs and events for our community. Since the publication of our fall edition of *Provisions*, we hosted many visitors with the 'Ye Olde Lebanon Militia' Revolutionary War encampment. The encampment was held over the weekend of September 8-10 with reenactors portraying both the Continental Army and the British Red Coats! During the afternoons of Saturday and Sunday the crowd was entertained with a mock battle on the Lebanon Green. Cannon and muskets could be heard for several hours as soldiers captured the flag!

Later that month, the Society held its 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Antique Show on the Lebanon Green and; although the weather was cool and damp, we had a very good turnout. We were pleasantly surprised when our governor, Dan Malloy, and wife (and security detail) appeared at the entrance gate. Thanks to Committee Chair, Jacy Worth, and the cast of volunteers the Antique Show was a success again this year.

In October, we held our second 'Soup and Story' night with our Master of Ceremonies, State Historian Walter Woodward. The attendees were entertained with many local stories of Lebanon and Columbia focused on the theme of transportation and travel. Walt records the stories and makes them available on podcast accessible via web site [www.gratingthenutmeg.libsyn.com](http://www.gratingthenutmeg.libsyn.com)

Thanks to our terrific staff and volunteers for planning and making sure all the mission related events are well coordinated for participants and guests.

We now turn our attention to our open house on the night of the town's Christmas tree lighting ceremony and additional winter programming. Please see the upcoming programming notes herein.

We continued to add to and upgrade the Museum grounds as mentioned in past articles. The Memorial Bricks have been re-etched in granite and replaced in the front walkway. The funding for this project was supported by money bequeathed to the Society by Ellen Lathrop, specifically for this purpose. Ellen was a founding member of the Society in 1965 and a member of the committee that originally sponsored the brick walkway. Thank you Ellen. ***Anyone who wishes to retrieve their original brick is welcome to do so. Let us know and we will retrieve your brick(s) and make them available.***

We are in the process of constructing a combination woodshed/privy in the rear of the Beaumont House (it may even be complete by this publication).

We have added a '5 Mile Rock' replica. "The five-mile square at Poque-chaneag was bounded on three of its corners by trees long since gone, but the crucial southwest corner is marked by the Five Mile Rock, which remains today as Lebanon's most ancient landmark." George Milne, *Lebanon: three centuries in a Connecticut hilltop town* (Lebanon Historical Society), p6.

While interesting to view, it remains difficult to access. Thanks to a donation from former president and longtime Society member, Glenn Pianka, we have a replica of the 5 Mile Rock on campus grounds adjacent to the Pastor's Library.

*Thanks to all our members for your continued support.*

### Welcome New Members!



#### *Family*

**Keith & Michelle Kersey**  
of Lebanon

**Nicole Yolda**  
of Lebanon

#### *Individual Senior*

**Carol Sommer**  
of Waterford

#### *Senior Couple*

**George & Elaine Clark**  
of Lebanon

# Director's Message

Donna Baron

Working at the Historical Society, I sometimes wonder what the word "history" means to people today. Our mission statement says that the Lebanon Historical Society encourages a sense of community by connecting residents and visitors with the people, places, objects and stories of the town's past. What do you think of when you see these words?

For some people, Lebanon's history is all about the Revolutionary War which is certainly a major episode in the town's past. The Historical Society has often commemorated this aspect of Lebanon's history with programs, exhibits and, most recently, an encampment on our expanded campus. Governor Jonathan Trumbull, William Williams and the other patriot leaders will always be of interest and importance. But there are so many other stories.

*The early settlers who came to a new place to start farms and begin a new life*

*The native people who were here before the English arrived*

*Families who left Lebanon for brighter prospect elsewhere and new comers who arrived to take over their lands*

*Baptists from Rhode Island who came to farm and championed the abolition of slavery*

*Irish laborers who came to work in the rubber-slitting mill and established a Catholic chapel*

*The men who left to fight for the country during the wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*

*The families who stayed behind to keep farms and businesses going*

*More families who left as jobs grew scarce*

*Eastern European and Italian farmers, French Canadian textile mill workers*

But, history is even more recent with changes that have impacted Lebanon over the last fifty years. The "How They Learned" exhibit explores history that many Historical Society members and Lebanon residents personally remember. Spring 2018's new exhibit about travel and transportation will also spark personal memories, but we still could use your help. Please share images and stories of vehicles and trips that were or are important to you. Call 860-642-6579 or stop by the Museum. We'd be delighted to look at your pictures and listen to your stories.


## Thank you for your generous donations to the Dorothea "Dolle" Fischer Memorial Fund

American Legion Post 180  
Roberta Anthony  
Brian & Liz Bourne  
Kevin & Christine Brown  
Center for Primary Care - Yoga Classes  
Colleen & Jim Crebase  
Donna DiMaggio  
Ronald & Judith Falk  
Doris & Craig Fischer  
William & Joan Russoniello Goba  
Jim & Julia Hallene  
Alan & Alicia Lamb

Joanne Lapaglia  
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Betty Mackey  
Robert & Margaret McCaw  
Susan Miller  
Howard & Annamarie Mindel  
Maxine Mindel  
Patricia Perkins  
Maurice & Lucy Simard  
The Ernie Staebner Family  
Ruth R. Wheeler

## Trivia Answer:

Paper hanger George E. Martin made and sold G.E.M. "Cough Remedy" in the house at 15 West Town Street, which some residents still call GEM Cottage. Martin's business failed, though tradition suggests that in 1915 he opened a confectionary store in his home. Around 1920, the house was given to the Baptist Church for use as a parsonage.

  
**Would you be  
willing to sponsor  
our newsletter?**

Every issue of the newsletter costs \$300 to produce and mail.

## Contact Us:

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

**860-642-6579**

**museum@  
historyoflebanon.org**

**www.  
historyoflebanon.org**

**facebook.com/  
historyoflebanon**

**Museum Hours:**  
Wed. thru Sat.  
12pm to 4pm

**Research Library**  
by appointment.



## Programs & Events

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are open to the public and  
are held at the museum



• **Sunday, May 6** •  
**4pm — 6pm**  
**52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**of the Lebanon**  
**Historical Society**

Business meeting begins  
at 4pm followed by the  
**Opening Reception**  
for our new exhibit,

*"From Here  
to There"*  
Transportation in Lebanon



• **Saturday, June 9** •  
**10am — 3pm**  
**Second Saturday in June**  
**Free - Family - Fun**

Antique car & truck rides  
around the Green and  
demonstrations by  
craftsmen of all types.  
Held rain or shine.



• **Saturday, July 21** •  
**5pm to 8pm**  
**"Evening at the Museum"**  
**Gala**



• **Saturday, September 29** •  
**9am to 3pm**  
**52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Antique**  
**Show on the Green**

## Liberty Hill and Chestnut Hill Post Offices Part Two

By Ed Tollmann

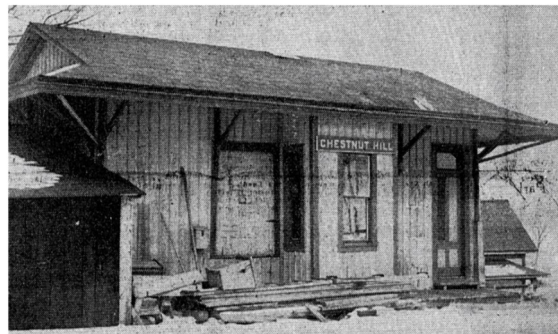
Once a system had been worked out,  
the mail seemed to run smoothly with  
the Chestnut Hill Post Office in the  
Liberty Hill section of Lebanon and the  
Liberty Hill Post Office a quarter mile  
away in the Liberty Hill General Store.  
In 1906, John L. Farnham was the

and Mrs. J.H. Burrill telephoned for help  
from Chestnut Hill, Cook Hill and  
Village Hill.

Though a large group of men  
gathered, nothing could be done to  
save the burning buildings. John H.  
Burrill's grocery store was only five feet



Above: Chestnut Hill  
general store where  
post office was located.



Left: Chestnut Hill  
Train station

postmaster and owned the general  
store, which housed the Post Office.

On November 12, about 1:00 am,  
John Farnham was awakened by a bright  
light shining into his room. He  
discovered that his store, the wood  
shed and the horse barns were on fire.  
The flames were rapidly spreading to  
the large barn and dwelling house. His  
housekeeper, Mrs. Mary Todd, ran  
down the street crying "FIRE," but only  
a few folks were awake to hear her.  
Herbert Willis began ringing the church  
bell which quickly summoned help.  
Mrs. Addie C. Tucker, Mrs. John Clark

from Mr. Farnham's store.  
Fearing that it too would  
burn, men and women quickly carried  
the store contents to safety across the  
street. Wet blankets were then draped  
over the roof. The men formed a  
bucket brigade that kept the roof and  
buildings wet until the fire was under  
control.

In the meanwhile, flames from the  
Post Office and barn spread to the  
house, shed and barn south of it known  
as the Hinckley place and owned by  
Mrs. Malvina Loomis. These buildings  
could not be saved and that section of  
Liberty Hill was not rebuilt until the  
1920s.

After the fire, the Post Office moved into James H. Burrill's store and he became postmaster in January 1907. By that July, the Post Office was discontinued and all mail was sent to the Chestnut Hill Post Office with Mrs. Eva Dimons as postmistress. In Liberty Hill, a rural route was set up, and until 1927, Sol Watchell was the rural carrier. He brought mail from the Chestnut Hill Post Office into Columbia

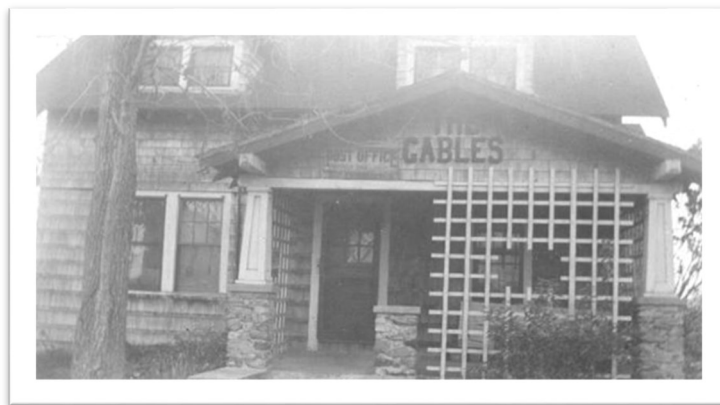
and down into the center of Lebanon. Henry V. Ohlers carried mail until August 1, 1940. His son Homer C. Ohlers took over the route.

By 1928, Elmer and Flora Caples had built a house on the former Farnham house and store lot. **On June 26, 1928, Mrs. Caples became postmistress for Chestnut Hill and moved the Post Office to her home (on the original site of the Liberty Hill Post Office). This led to bureaucratic confusion because Columbia and Lebanon were in different counties, but to avoid red tape, no effort was made to change the name.**

On July 1, 1948, Mrs. Margaret C. Meyers moved the Chestnut Hill Post Office from the Caples home to her house, which was called the "parsonage," just north of what was Swyden's store. The Post Office was downstairs in the front room and patrons entered through a door on the south side of the house. She served as postmistress until May 23, 1951, when Merwyn H. Squires assumed charge.

Mrs. Meyers was well liked in the

community so a petition was circulated to keep her as postmistress. This was sent to Washington, but Merwyn Squires was a WWI veteran and therefore had an



Post office run by postmistress for Chestnut Hill, Flora Caples

advantage on the civil service exam. Mr. Squires lived in the center of Lebanon on the Green. Once he had the postmaster's job, he bought two barracks buildings from the Navy in Groton, disassembled them and brought them to Liberty Hill where they were combined. The new building was erected between what most of us know as the Ohlers' house and Captain Gray's house. It is recognizable today as the long narrow house up off Trumbull Highway on the east side. The Post Office was in the left side. Squires retired as postmaster on December 27, 1965 and his wife Phoebe served as clerk until her retirement on April 5, 1966.

Mrs. Ella Barrett then became postmistress. January 1, 1967, the Chestnut Hill Post Office was closed and all mail was moved to Lebanon with rural routes originating there. Both the Liberty Hill and Chestnut Hill Post Offices were closed and the mix-up they created finally ended.

Some of the information in this article was found in 1906 *Norwich Bulletins*.

## Exhibits

*From Here  
to There*  
Transportation in Lebanon

### Coming in May 2018:

"From Here to There," an exhibit exploring the ways that travel and transportation have affected the lives of Lebanon residents.

For almost a year, a stalwart group of volunteers have been transcribing household inventories, perusing maps, studying census reports and reviewing oral histories and reminiscences.

By foot and horseback or in wagons, trains, and cars, people have travelled to, from and within Lebanon for hundreds of years.

A sneak peek is available if you'd like to volunteer during exhibit installation.

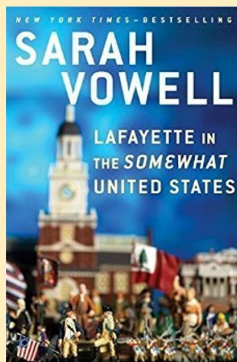
Otherwise, please plan a visit after May 6, 2018.

***If you haven't had a chance to see our current exhibit about Learning in Lebanon you only have until the end of February when it will be dismantled.***



## A Good Read

By Linda Wallace



### *Lafayette In the Almost United States*

By Sarah Vowell

Most of us know that the Marquis Lafayette fought for the Americans in the American Revolution, but there is so much more to know about him. Sarah Vowell uses his involvement in the Revolution to guide us through this period of history. She does this not with dry facts, but with wit and fascinating and amusing insights into American history.

She begins with Lafayette's return to the U.S. in 1824. Although it's been fifty years since the end of the Revolutionary War, he was still revered for his aid to the U.S. in the war. Cities and streets and colleges are named for him, songs composed in his honor, monuments and statues erected in appreciation of his patriotism, memorabilia manufactured to commemorate his return. He was a rock star of the age.

Lafayette, a wealthy

*Continued on page 7 sidebar*

## Revolutionary War Encampment

The rattle of muskets, the boom of a cannon and the chatter of visitors and presenters filled the air of an early September weekend at the Historical



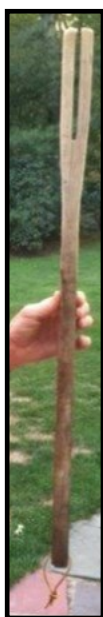
Society. Thanks to the members of the Olde Lebanon Towne Militia, and their friends from other units, several hundred visitors participated in the recreation of a Revolutionary War encampment. Children of all ages tried using a drawing bench and a potter's wheel, talked with soldiers, school masters and housewives and watched as British and American units staged a mock battle. Thanks to our friends of the First Congregation Church there were burgers, hot dogs and great "sweet treats" for sale. The Beaumont House and Pastor's Library docents welcomed many visitors and the Beaumont House hosted a great fireplace baking demonstration. What a wonderful step back in time for everyone involved!

## WHAT'S

### IT?

Do you know what this wooden object is?

Take a guess and let us know what you think.



Work is progressing on the Farming Exhibit which will open in the spring. The exhibit will feature Lebanon's dairying history, the story of the Lebanon Creamery, old-time activities like ice cutting and antique agricultural tools. One section will feature equipment used by "farm wives" such as the object featured as this issue's "What's It." Perhaps the image of a related artifact from the exhibit will provide a clue.



# Antique Show Behind the Scenes

By Sandie Chalifoux

When one thinks of the Antique Show on the Green, we see the dealers set up with all their wares - hopefully, beautiful, blue skies with the sun shining down, the beautiful fall leaves beginning to turn - weather to enjoy the day searching for a rare item and a bargain.

However, for the kitchen crew that consists of Jacy and Jim Worth, Vicki Duff, Sue Kane, Shayla Coutu, Connie Berglund, Stella Chabot. Tom Meyers and myself, the



Inside kitchen crew

their homemade pies solicited by Melissa Hayes—they have to be cut into serving pieces, and wrapped on individual plates.

Coffee pot kept full, especially if it is a cool day. Sounds like a lot of work, it is, but we have a fun time preparing and then we get to taste the results before it is served!!!!!!

The most rewarding part of the day is when the individuals attending the Antique Show start entering the church hall to buy their lunch.

They have been waiting

for the chowders and the pies. This is the second year we have sold out of everything, chowder and sandwiches!

If you didn't make it this year, come next year and get a taste of what you've been missing!

day starts at 7:00 to prepare and put together gallons of clam and corn chowder. The onions and celery all chopped by Pam Handfield and ready for us when we arrive. The potatoes then scrubbed, cut up into cubes - Yes, it is all made from scratch. The cooking begins! From the time that it starts, to the final additions of clams, corn, etc, it is a process of constant stirring so that nothing burns. Four huge pots are cooking at the same time. We also put together the chicken salad and ham salad sandwiches. About sixty of those. The pie bakers are coming in delivering

## Lafayette

Continued from page 6 sidebar

nobleman, was just nineteen when he clandestinely left France to volunteer to fight for the revolutionists and freedom, leaving behind a young pregnant wife. It was with some misgivings that the Continental Congress accepted his assistance. A brash, but charismatic young man, Benjamin Franklin vouched for him, and it wasn't long before he endeared himself to George Washington and Lafayette became Washington's loyal supporter and obtained the rank of Major General. Many of the officers in the Continental Army were jealous of Washington and having the support of Lafayette must have been a source of great reassurance.

Using Lafayette, Vowell leads us through the successes and failures of the American Revolution. She follows the battles of the revolution, not only on the battlefield, but also in the halls of the Continental Congress. Washington had lost New York and the Philadelphia seats of the Continental Congress to the British. This did not inspire all the members of the Continental Congress to have confidence in his leadership abilities.

Vowell gives a 'hats off' to the French government for helping finance and provide arms to the revolutionary

Continued on page 8 sidebar



Outside grill crew



## Lafayette

*Continued from page 7 sidebar*

effort. Thanks in great part to the diplomacy of Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane. Strange bedfellows – an absolute monarchy backing a country fighting for democracy. She also recognizes the contributions of Baron von Steuben from Prussia for teaching the untrained and poorly armed and attired army the tactics of war, as well as the invaluable service of the Comte de Rochambeau and the integral role of the French Navy, without which the war would never have been won.

The words, *somewhat United States*, in the title references that not all were of the same mind and accord as to the aims of the revolution. Vowell makes the observation that our founders weren't gods, but ordinary men who could exhibit jealousy, arrogance, poor judgment and cranky and quarrelsome personalities. This book is a story of the bickering and infighting that occurred as well as a story of the friendship between Lafayette and Washington and the Americans and their French allies.

Sarah Vowell has written six other non-fiction books, ranging from exploring a year of listening to the radio in "Radio On." This caught

*Continued on page 9 sidebar*

# Gates & Gates Farm Road, Old Highway & Rafferty Road

By Rick Kane

Gates Road and Gates Farm Road are located in the northeast section of Lebanon, east of Lebanon Village, south of Willimantic and west of Windham center on the highest point in New London County at 660 feet above sea level. The 1957 Connecticut Department of Transportation map of Lebanon identifies this hill as Gates Hill.

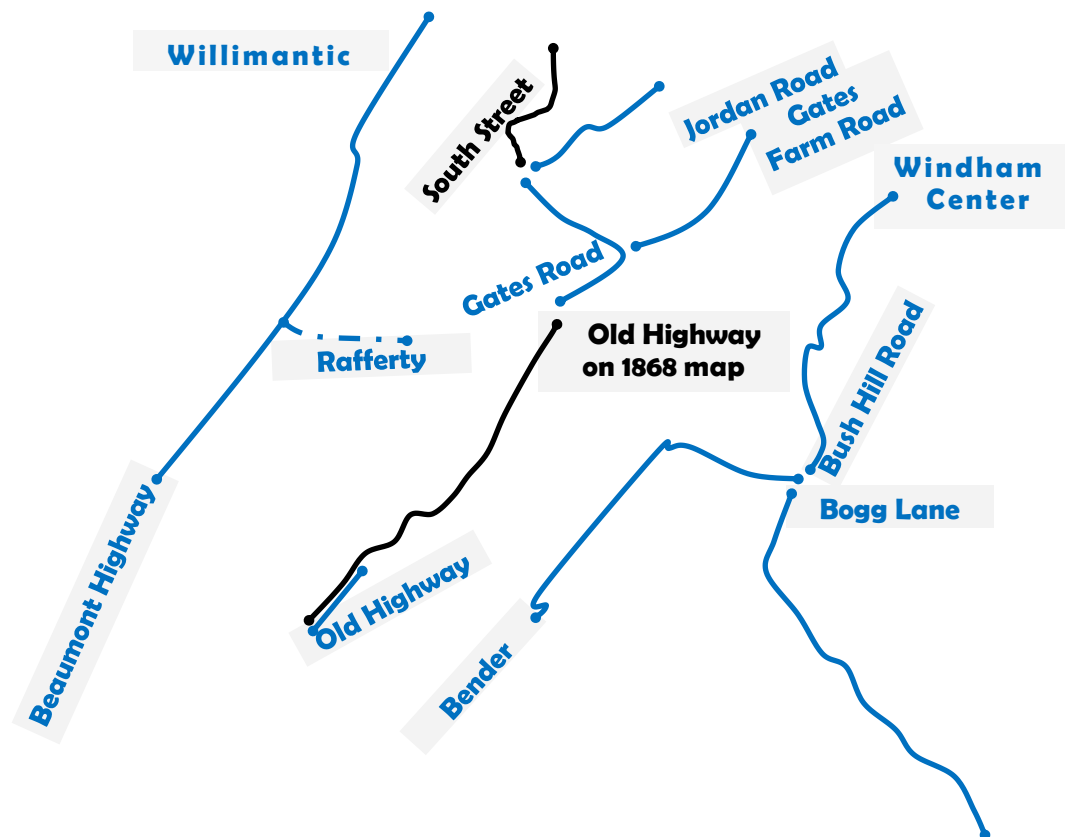
The origins of the Gates legacy begins with Windham resident, William F. Gates who purchased property on this hill in the 1850s. He was listed as a farmer in the 1860 US Census. He married Maria Ford, daughter of Ezekial Ford, a farmer living in the area of Kick Hill. William F. Gates continued to purchase lands abutting his original from and eventually accumulated a very large tract of land. The property remained in the Gates family until the late

twentieth century.

Upon his death, William left the property to his sons Arthur and Andrew. Andrew was a lawyer living and working in Hartford, but continued to maintain and use the property during summers. Andrew eventually became the sole owner of the property. Upon his death in 1941, he left the property to his daughters Elizabeth and Margaret, but provided "life use" for his wife, Alice Welch Gates. Alice passed in 1952. According to Andrew's will, the total size of the property accumulated by the Gates family was 565 acres.

Elizabeth Welch Gates and Margaret Gates Creamer sold off the property from which the Gates Farm Subdivision was created. A 1973 survey of the property

*Continued on Page 11*



1868 Beers Atlas of Lebanon



# Thelma & Louise Remember

Anonymous

Lebanon: "Winter Season" 50+ years ago:

~Winter in Lebanon meant a bit less outdoor farming chores (except for plowing and shoveling snow) as more time was spent inside with the bovines.

~Some big snow storms had bulldozers plowing local roads: Babcock Hill, Briggs Road and the **Alfred Lamb** farm area would get snowed in, impassable for a few days, as snow drifts (which still continue to this day) would fill the narrow roadways.

~Adventurous horse riders would venture out on milder days, where snow banks and drifts were as high as, and even higher than, the horse and riders heads.

~In the 50s **Kalmon Kurcinik** would allow local teens to skate on his property. The Bogg Lane ponds are still some of the most scenic in town and many have fond memories of the fun gatherings with food, bon fires and the local guys "doing donuts" on the frozen water with their "hot-rods." Vivid memory of driving through the bar-way to skate one evening and the radio announcing that the "Big Bopper" and others had been killed in a plane crash in Iowa. Popular in the 50s, he had the hit single "Chantilly Lace." We'll always remember where we and other local teens were on February 3, 1959!

~Daily walks to the chicken coop would entail toting hot water to help break the ice and remove it from the watering pans for the numerous feathered friends. Fun hearing the sound of roosters crowing in the out-buildings as you approached. Hens clucking and milling around your feet as you tap the frozen water and the contented gurgling of the cooped birds, following the daily "chicken-watering-chores."

~Every day time was spent shoveling silage down the chutes to feed the stanchioned cows. Climb up the silo rungs, shovel silage out, remove slats as feed was

lowered, climb down, shovel accumulated pile into baskets (bushel baskets would be obtained from supermarkets for use and delivery to the far side of the barn and storage of feed) and/or mangers and feed each individual animal.

~To sweeten the cow's hay, molasses would be spread over their feed. Large barrels of the dark liquid were kept in the farmer's yard. Trekking through the cold and snow to obtain large buckets of the oozing stuff, which was schlepped back to the barn to be distributed by watering cans, clearly illustrated: "...as slow as molasses." Can still hear the "glub-glub-glub" sounds coming from the barrel during the labor intensive, cold, slow, job!

~Every evening someone needed to travel to the barn to "sweep-the-hay" back to each cow's reach. Old barns had wooden type mangers which kept the feed nearer the animal. Newer barns had open/cement space in front of the animals, which meant the feed would be dispersed by the cow as she ate. Many an eve, following a local school dance or event, ended with the local teens tending to that chore, ten, eleven p.m. or later!

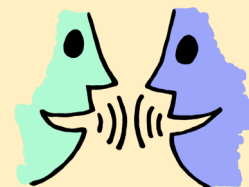
~Lyman's basketball team held their local games in the "gym" (presently the all-purpose/ cafeteria room) at the Elementary School. Varsity basketball players, pictured in the '57 yearbook: **Richard Chalifoux, Pete Nunez, Harvey Kerachsky, Arnold Hussey, Alan Greenberg, Jeff Adams, Jim Abell, Neil Cowles, Robert McCaw, Ken Arsenault, Ralph Foster, Mr. Marshall Jenkins, Robert Abell, Sheldon Messinger, Ed Leete.** (3-13 for the season).

~The class of 1957 had 6 teachers: **Grant, Jenkins, Lindeberg, Stevens, Mitchell & Baglini.** Last names of the 25 grads: **Cranick, Greenberg, Jello,**

## Lafayette

*Continued from page 8 sidebar*

the attention of Ira Glass who hosts NPR's *This American Life* and led to Vowell becoming a frequent contributor to the show. She also wrote about the overthrow of Hawaii in "Unfamiliar Fishes." She has been published in the Village Voice, The New York Times, LA Times and Esquire to name a few. She has also appeared on Nightline, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and the Colbert Report. She does not consider herself a historian, but a historical narrator. She is able to take a time in history and relate events across time as she shows in this book.



Our next

**History Book Club**

will be held at

**7pm on Wednesday,  
January 10, 2018**

Our next book will be

**"Thirty-Eight:**

**The Hurricane**

**That Transformed  
New England"**

**by Stephen Long**

*Everyone is welcome.*

Even if you haven't finished to book you are welcome to join us!

*Continued on Page 10 sidebar*

## ***Thelma & Louise Remember***

*Continued from page 9*

**Bastenbeck, Abell, Adamson, Allen, Bean, Burgess, Chalifoux, Dunham, Fish, Hussey, Hart, Manning, Marrotte, Miller, Nunez, Spencer, Standish, Strauss, Szajda, Tyler & Wegener.**

~Cheerleaders for the team included: **Bender, Manning, Chalifoux, Jello, Szajda, Hart, Marrotte, Tyler, Grover, Cummings, Skulchuk, Fish, Garey, Mason & Stratton.**

~Some advertisers in the '57 Lymoria Yearbook: Goettlich Bros., Hurley-Grant, Curran's Pharmacy, Manning Farm Supply, Butler's Dairy, Jack Roan, Dawson's Florist, Keefe's Service Station, Dairyland, Hurley's, boy's and students, the Eldredge Farm Supply, Inc., Wright's Tractor Service, Kanter's Sales and Service & Puhlick lumber, hardware and supplies.

~Winter highlights: Warmth of cows that envelopes you entering the barn on a cold, snowy, frosty A.M.

~Frosted window panes dripping and melting with the warmth of the day.

~Odoriferous mixtures and combinations of silage,

*Continued on page 11 sidebar*

## **New Family Farm**

*Continued from page 1*

farms on 580 acres in Lebanon and forty acres in Cromwell. Propagation, growing and sales are handled by hundreds of year-round and seasonal employees who undertake the 100s of little steps that Mark Sellew says are essential for growing plants to sell. By 1998, annual sales reached more than \$11,000,000. Today, on a single busy day in May, more than \$800,000 worth of plants are shipped out.

Being in Lebanon has been key to Prides Corner's success. According to Mark, Lebanon is the perfect locations with easy access to the farm's primary market around Boston and New York City. Lebanon's long farming tradition and Willimantic's significant immigrant labor pool have both been assets for the Sellses. Even Lebanon's weather is advantageous with its location between the coastal winter rains and the inland heavy snows. Now the largest agricultural employer in Connecticut and Lebanon's largest employer, Prides Corner is still growing and facing both new challenges and opportunities.

Looking to the recent past and future, Mark Sellew noted a shift in consumer demand from woody shrubs and trees to a desire for color. In addressing this change, Prides Corner has increased its growing of colorful plants that span the entire growing season. Roses, hydrangeas and perennials are current strong sellers. Mark's personal interest in ecology has inspired the company's recent focus on native and pollinator plants. Prides Corner is always looking for better examples of familiar plant varieties, investing hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to purchase rights to genetically superior varieties. Another growth area, "Live Roofs," was a successful effort to diversify both product and markets. This rather specialized niche provides a 21st century solution to increase natural evaporative cooling effect and storm water retention



Mark Sellew

while improving the aesthetics of modern urban and suburban construction.

Business challenges include weather extremes from drought to unexpectedly severe storms. Efforts to better manage the use and reclamation of water are second only to pest and disease management. Solutions may be high tech or almost old fashioned as management and employees try to tread lightly on the land while coping with issues related to changing climate and international trade. Retention ponds conserve water and attract native wildlife. Integrated pest management provides controls for imported blights while preserving beneficial insects.

As modern day family farmers, the Sellses firmly believe in giving back to the community and Lebanon has benefited in many ways. In addition to being the town's largest tax payer, Prides Corner donates dollars, plant materials and labor to many local organizations. In 2017, projects included installing a pollinator garden at the Jonathan Trumbull, Jr House and providing a scholarship for a Lyman Memorial High School student. For many years, Prides Corner has donated plants for the Historical Society's silent auction and loaned the plants that decorate our campus during Evening at the Museum. The company's generosity is also seen in neighboring communities including Willimantic, where many of their employees live.

Prides Corner Farms has no cows or chickens and none of the oxen or horses once common on Lebanon farms. Much of their land is covered with metal framed grow houses and a state-of-the-art shipping facility. Newly installed photovoltaic panels provide 50% of the farm's electricity. With goals of beautifying the world and stewardship of the land, Prides Corner joins Lebanon's other 21st century farms in carrying on the town's proud agricultural traditions.

## Gates & Gates Farm Roads,

*Continued from page 8*

identified the Gates Farm subdivision as 515 acres situated between what are currently know as Gates Road, Gates Farm Road, Bender Road and Bush Hill Road.

Thanks to Rita Brisson Lataille (who grew up on Jordan Road, and whose Grandfather Heliodore LaFontaine and father Armand Brisson were caretakers for the Gates family) we know the original house was on the right side as you proceed up Gates Hill from Willimantic. The house sat just beyond the intersection of Jordan Road. The farm house was a subsequent purchase on what is now Gates Farm Road and was known as Hilltop. Hilltop was eventually destroyed but the barn remained in place and has since been converted to a residence.

Rita recalls that Miss Elizabeth insisted that the barn be kept as pristine as any home. Rita's father had to make sure there were no spider webs and swept the floor boards and side boards every day. She also remembers a baseball field near the small cemetery (Greenman/Card Cemetery) which is now long since gone.

In the process of researching this road name, some other interesting facts surfaced. Many of the land records call what is now Beaumont Highway (from the end of the Lebanon Green to the area of the sharp turn near the Lutheran Church) "Village Street" or the "Road to Willimantic." On the 1868 map, the road appears to be a 90 degree right turn, much more pronounced than today.

The current "Old Highway" (a right off Beaumont highway just a bit south across from where the Old Route 89 loop ends) was a continuous road that joined 'Gates Road' (at the point of the 90 degree turn that exist today). This was the main road into Windham from Lebanon.

The "Old Highway" continued all the way to Windham, as shown on the 1868



Old highway looking west from Gates Road

map, incorporating parts of modern Gates Road and Gates Farm Road. Likewise, what is today known as Rafferty Road was also a continuous road that merged with Jordan Road. A section of that road has been abandoned as well. Both of these roads appear on the 1868 map and are also visible in the 1934 aerial photo of Lebanon.

Today, Gates Road changes to South Street at the Lebanon-Willimantic town line, but prior to it being named Gates Road it was South Street in Lebanon as well. It only extended to the intersection of the 90 degree turn. The construction of the section of Gates Road from Bender Road to the 90 degree turn was approved at a town meeting on March 5, 1962, though it had probably been a dirt laneway. There was also a road that extended from South Street straight through the Gates Road - Gates Farm Road intersection to Bush Hill. This no longer exists, but can be seen in the 1934 aerial photo of Lebanon.

*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.*

## Thelma & Louise Remember

*Continued from page 10*

hay, molasses and grains in the barn.

~Cold winter air that hits your face, traversing toward the barn, through snow drifts at 5 A.M.

~Outstretched slobbering tongues that grope for the retreating hay and grain in the mangers.

~Dreaded wet tail cow swishes, as the bovines get up, following their night of tail dangling in sloppy urine soaked gutters.

~The closeness, and warmth, one feels while resting one's head into the side of a cow while "stripping" her udder, following the removal of the milking machine.

~The milking barn cats hovering near their milk dish, waiting for their morning drinks.

~The musty odor of the cool water surrounding the 40-quart milk cans residing in the milk-tanks of old. After straining the milk into cans and tapping their lids shut, they were placed into the large vat of water, to cool down until picked up by the "milk-man."

**Oh the memories  
= PRICELESS!**





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 **Provisions**

History  
? Trivia  
Question:

During the 1890s, what patent medicine was produced in a small house on the west side of the Lebanon Green?

See page 3 for the answer.

Join us for the annual Tree Lighting  
and our Museum Open House  
on Sunday, December 3  
between 6pm and 8pm

*Lantern Tours of the Beaumont House & Pastor's Library  
Holiday crafts for kids ~ Ginger snaps and mulled cider*

On your visit you can enjoy  
our display of needlework  
created by young women  
in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early  
19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Many thanks to the generous  
lender for sharing their  
intriguing collection  
with all of our visitors.

