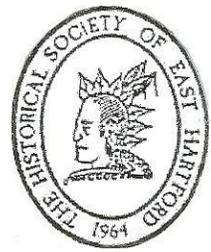


# *Historical Society of East Hartford*

*Newsletter, November 2012*



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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As I write this article the first mist and breeze from Hurricane Sandy are at my window. By the time you read this, the storm shall have ended. I do hope all Historical Society members escaped with minimal property damage and loss of electric power. Another October with Halloween all but canceled and I'm stuck with another large bag of candy. The month of November has an all important political election so I urge all members to get out and vote for their candidates of choice. November also brings you my first president's message. I wish to thank the nominating committee for placing their trust in me as Historical Society President for the 2012 – 2013 year. We are also grateful to Dan Russell who agreed to a new 4- year term as a Director of the Board.

For those of us who attended the September annual dinner meeting at the First Congregational Church, another delicious buffet was provided by Becker's Catering and our entertainment featuring historian and musician Rick Spencer transported us back into time where we listened to songs from the Civil War era that were popular in both the northern and southern states. The regular November meeting at the Raymond Library Community Room is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14 so as not to conflict with the Thanksgiving Day holiday. Our guest speaker will be Dan W. DeLuca giving us a program on the Old Leather Man.

During the weekend of September 29 and 30, the Historical Society had a table and tent at Wickham Park in Manchester for the second annual Encampment and Reenactment sponsored by the Connecticut Civil War Commemoration Committee. This two day event showcased two major battles that occurred 150 years ago. On Saturday, the battle of Antietam was reenacted and on Sunday it was the battle of Fredericksburg. The weather was cloudy but it did not rain. Participating in this event was important. It allowed us to promote our Historical Society and become more visible. We passed out membership applications and brochures about our museums at Martin Park. We also sold some of our 2013 calendars. I want to thank our member volunteers who agreed to help out at our booth for this 2-day event. We exhibited my own personal collection of 1962 Civil War Centennial Topps trading cards that proved to be very eye-catching to all who stopped by. We also had on loan an invitation sent to a Connecticut veteran to attend the 75th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg where he fought.

We were extremely fortunate to meet an East Hartford couple who offered to donate to our Historical Society a Civil War letter sent by an East Hartford soldier to his mother. The letter was dated October 9, 1862 and sent from the 7th Conn. Regiment hospital located at Hilton Head, SC. I want to again thank Mr. and Mrs. John Simkewicz for their donation. John obtained the letter many years ago from his friend Charlie Steele who found it in an attic of a 19th century home on Silver Lane which no longer stands. The letter was addressed to a Mrs. Pratt. Her son Samuel died at age 22 on October 28, 1862. It is very possible this was his last letter sent home and that's why it was saved. Samuel A. Pratt is on the 1868 Civil War Monument at Center Cemetery honoring the soldiers from East Hartford who did not survive the war, so this acquisition to our collections is extremely important to us. Pictures of the letter and the text will appear in a later newsletter.

Craig Johnson

## **DAN DELUCA TO SPEAK ON "THE OLD LEATHERMAN" AT NOVEMBER'S MEETING**

The Historical Society of East Hartford will hold its November business meeting on Wednesday, November 14th at 7:00 pm in the Lion's Room downstairs at the Raymond Library. Following the meeting, the planned program for the evening is a lecture and video by author, Dan DeLuca, who will talk about his research and subsequent writings on a New York and Connecticut real-life legend, "The Old Leatherman".

The subject of this presentation was a mysterious figure (see photo right) who appeared in 1856—wandering the country roads and sleeping in caves, huts, and lean-to shelters, dressed in an outfit he fashioned from scraps of leather. About 1883, he began traveling in his famous clockwise circuit—a regular route of 365 miles every 34 days. He continued this pattern between the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers until his death in 1889.

Mr. DeLuca is also a genealogist; a Meriden, Connecticut historian; and a retired teacher. He has been researching the Leather Man for twenty years and is the leading expert on the subject.

Please join us for an entertaining evening. The meeting and the program are open to the public. For more information contact Bette Daraskevich, Program Chair, at 860-568-5188.



## AROUND AND ABOUT

### Ed & Marie Carlson Remember Oct 29, 2011

It seems hard to believe that 1 year has already passed since last Oct 29, 2011 when wet snow fell on trees full of leaves, broke branches, caused so many downed trees and power lines, and created such havoc here<sup>1</sup>. Anniversaries tend to bring back memories and Ed and Marie Carlson would like to share their story from last year.

Marie and Ed remember how grown trees fell in their front and back yards and blocked both doors during that snow. When they opened their front door (it opened in) all they could see were branches on their front porch leaning against the storm door. They could not get out. Back door? There were branches too and getting out was impossible. Also that door was a steel one that had been badly dented by falling branches and limbs. Opening it was not easy. It had to be pushed hard. And once open would not close without more heavy pushing. Eventually it would be replaced. So, branches against both doors how would they get out? In the excitement of seeing all this, it took a couple of seconds to remember the garage door. That door was ok. Good. It was possible to go in and out. In the meantime an enterprising handyman, looking for work cutting branches, happened to come by and saw them. He had his saw and offered to cut the branches away from their doors. When he had finished they found that one of the front door's 'branches' was a foot in diameter. Their son came by and helped remove branches from some of their fallen trees. Their son-in-law also came by, found they had no electricity, packed them up, and took them home with him. For the next 4-5 days they stayed with him, their daughter, their grandson, 5 year old Danny, 2 dogs and 2 cats until they had electricity again. Their daughter's home was generator powered. It was limited power but by choosing circuits they could have heat, electricity, do the laundry, and get water from the well. This was not bad. Perhaps best of all they could spend time with their family and watching dvds with Danny.

### Futtner's Farm Turns 100 & Receives the Century Farm Award

The Historical Society wishes Futtner's Family Farm a Very Happy 100th Birthday and congratulates them on receiving the Century Farm Award from the Connecticut Agricultural Station. This award is given yearly to a farm that has been a family operation for a century.



Futtners Stand on Silver Lane, October 2012.

up once a week at the stand. What you get is what the skills and hard work of the Futtners have grown and ripened

<sup>1</sup> See some East Hartford reminiscences in the HSEH Newsletter, November 2011.

for market – tomatoes, 2 types of corn, cabbage, green beans, eggplants, cucumbers, and a variety of peppers, cantaloupes, plums, fall mums and more. As in farming there is no guarantee here of specific produce or even any produce. As the farm grows so does your box. In a way it brings the realities of farming a bit closer to their non-farming CSA customers. The prepaid money is used for buying seeds, fertilizers, making repairs to equipment. Down the street from the stand, if you'd rather get a little more involved in farming, they have fields open for “pick your own”.

Jim and Honora are the Futtners who today operate this stand. They are the 4<sup>th</sup> generation in a 100 year long, proud line of Futtner farmers who have raised and sold produce. Jim's great grandparents came here from Italy toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They bought land here in East Hartford and started growing tobacco. Later they changed over to vegetables. The family grew and younger Futtner farmers took over the land. Their farm expanded into fields in South Windsor. Their markets expanded. Today another stand they have is at the South Windsor Historical Society's Sunday Farmers' Market. But their story may not continue. No one in the young generation of Futtners has the desire to farm. Farming today, Jim and Honora find, has ever increasing costs in hiring help and complying with the rules for raising and selling produce. Their income can be lean. Then there is the work: 7 days a week in the summer; in the winter 5 days a week with no income. It can be difficult. But, in spite of this, Jim and Honora relish the perks farming gives them – working outside, the exercise they get, watching plants they've planted grow, interacting with friendly customers, and just doing what they love, farming.

To read more on Jim and Honora's lives as farmers check out the wonderful 9 part series the *Hartford Courant* published in 1999-2000. It is the story of a year of farming with the Futtners, their family who work the land, problems met and overcome, other problems not, the joy in a good harvest and a reasonable income. It is well worth the time to read it. Check it out on the Futtner site at <http://www.futtnerfarm.com/>, and click on “Seed to Shelf”.

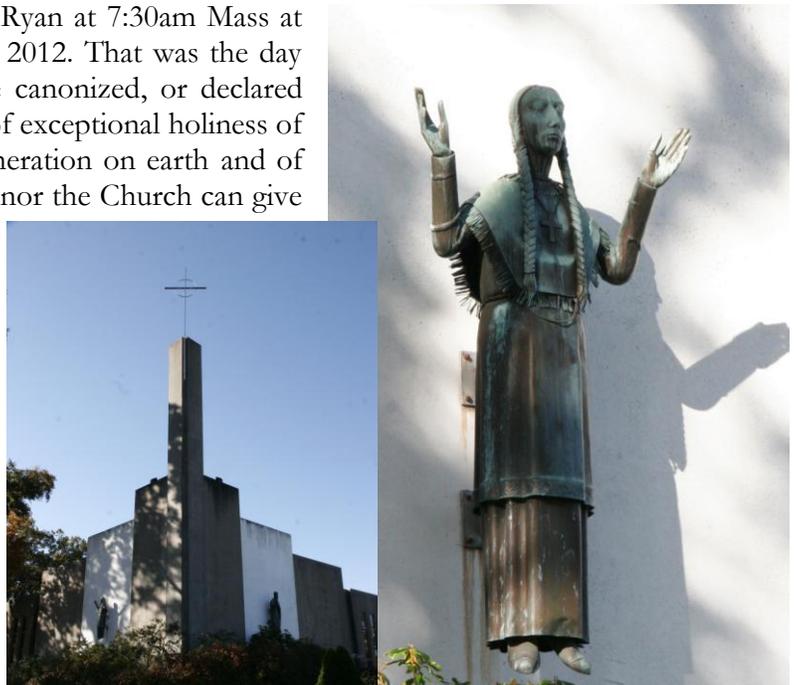
Again, Happy Birthday, Futtners. And many more. And sincere Congratulations on your family's award.

### “Local Girl Makes Good”

These words were spoken by Father Tim Ryan at 7:30am Mass at St Isaac Jogues Church Sunday morning, Oct 21, 2012. That was the day on which 7 people from around the world were canonized, or declared saints, by the Catholic Church. Saints are people of exceptional holiness of life who are exalted in Heaven and worthy of veneration on earth and of being prayed to. Being canonized is the highest honor the Church can give a person. The girl Father Tim was referring to was one of these new saints, the Native American girl Kateri Tekakwitha. Her statue is one of two on the outside walls of St Isaac Jogues Church in Mayberry Village, East Hartford. The statue of St Isaac Jogues is the other. St Isaac Jogues was a French, Jesuit missionary to the Native Americans, martyred by them at Auriesville, NY in 1646.

Kateri was born about 1656 near Auriesville, NY. Her mother was a Catholic Algonquin who had been captured by Mohawks. Her father was a Mohawk chief. The two married and Kateri and her younger brother were born. She was about 4 when smallpox killed her parents and her brother. The disease

left Kateri's face badly scarred and destroyed much of her eyesight. She was called Tekakwitha. It is said to mean something akin to “who stumbles into things” or “who walks gropingly”. When she was young Jesuits came to her village to teach Christianity. She later accepted their teachings and on Easter Sunday in 1676 she was baptized and became a Christian. Because of the severe hostility of her people to her new beliefs she was advised to flee to a group of Christian Native Americans in Canada. She did. There at Kanawake, across the St Lawrence from



St Isaac Jogues Church (l) is on the corner of Community St & Home Terrace. Statue of Kateri above is the statue on the left.

Montreal, she continued to live a life of deep love for Christ and service to her people. She died there in 1680. The Jesuits recorded that very shortly after her death her skin became clear and healthy. The scars had vanished. This was the first of 2 miracles necessary for her to be canonized.. The 2<sup>nd</sup> occurred in 2006 when 5 year old Jake Finkbonner (part Native American Lummi) contracted an incurable flesh eating disease that was killing him. Prayers to Kateri for her help are said to have brought about his cure. Two miracles that happened 300 plus years apart supported her canonization this year.

Her sainthood is recognized and honored worldwide by Catholics and others. Catholics have named her Patroness of the Environment and Ecology along with St Francis of Assisi and called her Protectress of Canada. She is also commonly called the “Lily of the Mohawks” because of her love of purity. She is revered by native peoples, American and Canadian. It may be that she will be a help for those around the world being harassed for their Christian beliefs. This “local girl” has made good on a world stage. The next time you’re in the Village and drive by St Isaac’s, take a moment and look at her statue. You now know something of her story.

### Some Photos of the September 29-30, 2012 Reenactment at Wickham Park

Below are some scenes from the Sunday afternoon, September 30, reenactment at Wickham Park. The reenactors that day reenacted the wave after wave of futile charges by Union troops against well entrenched Confederates at the Battle of Fredericksburg, VA, December 13, 1862. In the bottom row, Lee’s artillery is at the stone wall on the hill. Lower on that hill are Union forces ready to charge (right). The narrator is seated.



## CIVIL WAR SNAPSHOT, MAY 1862 – JUNE 1862<sup>2</sup>

- Mar 26-28, 1862 Battle of Glorieta Pass, NM; Confeds win but must withdraw; supplies, animals lost; decisive battle of their NM Campaign (Feb-Apr, 1862); will not control CO & CA gold, south CA ports
- Apr 15, 1862 Skirmish at Picacho Pass, AZ; westernmost fight in war; Confed victory overshadowed by Confed retreat at Glorieta Pass; will not link with CA sympathizers, reach CA ports
- May 1, 1862 Members of Mormon UT's Nauvoo Legion ride from Salt Lake City to help the Union army guard the overland mail and telegraph in north UT and southwest WY; UT's only military help in the war
- May 3, 1862 Peninsula: at Yorktown Gen McClellan brings in powerful cannon; feels greatly outnumbered; Confed Gen Johnston will not fight artillery battle he will lose, retreats north; Norfolk is vulnerable
- May 5, 1862 Peninsula Campaign's 1<sup>st</sup> pitched battle is a back-and-forth encounter at Williamsburg between retreating Confeds and Federal troops; Confeds retreat to Richmond; 2,000 casualties on each side
- May 5, 1862 Mexican forces under Gen Zaragoza defeat imperial French forces at Puebla near Mexico City, a temporary victory against foreign invaders; Mexican forces celebrate the 1<sup>st</sup> Cinco de Mayo day
- May 6, 1862 Lincoln, Stanton (Sec'ty War), and Chase (Sec'ty Treasury) arrive at Ft Monroe to see McClellan; while waiting, Lincoln joins scouting party seeking a landing site for troops to take Norfolk
- May 8, 1862 Shenandoah Valley: Confed Gen Stonewall Jackson defeats Union forces at McDowell (8<sup>th</sup>), Front Royal (23<sup>rd</sup>), 1<sup>st</sup> Winchester (25<sup>th</sup>); DC is threatened; Union forces held in Valley and from McClellan
- May 9, 1862 Union Gen Hunter, in charge of Dept of the South (SC, GA, FL), declares slaves in these states "forever free"; Lincoln is caught by surprise
- May 9, 1862 Union navy takes Baton Rouge, LA capital, about 80 miles north of New Orleans and 120 miles south of Vicksburg; Union army will leave city in Aug, but will return in Dec to stay
- May 10, 1862 Lincoln, as commander-in-chief, orders Maj Gen Wool to take Norfolk; Sec'ty Chase accompanies Wool as unofficial co-commander; Norfolk area falls; Gosport will be renamed Norfolk shipyard
- May 10, 1862 Union troops take Pensacola, FL; will be critical base for Union blockade of Gulf of Mexico ports
- May 11, 1862 Tatnall, commander of the ironclad *CSS Virginia*, lost his ship's home port of Norfolk; burns the *CSS Virginia* to avoid capture; James River to Richmond now open to Union gunboats
- May 13, 1862 Robert Smalls, slave, captures Confed supply ship in Charleston; escapes with others to Union forces; will serve the Union as pilot and captain in the war; later will become US Congressman
- May 15, 1862 Rudeness to his men by New Orleans ladies (final straw the dumping of a chamber pot on Admiral Farragut) lessens noticeably after Gen Butler orders his men to regard such ladies as prostitutes
- May 15, 1862 Peninsula: small Federal fleet on the James River, including the *Monitor* and the ironclad *Galena*, stopped by Confeds 7 miles south of Richmond at Drewry's Bluff/Fort Darling; cannot shell city
- May 16, 1862 Escaped slave Josiah Carter of Shirley Plantation reaches the *Monitor*; is not returned to owner, officers can no longer return slaves; becomes '1<sup>st</sup> class boy', one of Navy's 1<sup>st</sup> enlisted contrabands

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/10/29/opinion/20101029-civil-war.html>.

[The Library of Congress Illustrated Timeline of the Civil War](#), Wagner, Margaret E., Little and Brown & Co., NY, NY; 2011.

[The Civil War Chart](#), Contributing Writers Martha Graham, George Skoch; Consultant William C. Davis, Publications International Limited, Lincolnwood, IL., 60646.

Footnote, Shelby [The Civil War A Narrative](#), 3 vols, New York: Random House, 1958.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Picacho\\_Pass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Picacho_Pass), Battle of Picacho Pass

<http://www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/shenandoah/svs0-1.html>, Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

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[www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/hh/33/hh33f.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/hh/33/hh33f.htm), Part One The Peninsula Campaign, Summer 1862.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Days\\_Battles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Days_Battles), Seven Days Battles.

<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/seven-days-battles/>, Seven Days Battles

<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/gainesmill/gaines-mill-history/ten-facts-about-the-battle-of.html>, Ten Facts about the Battle of Gaines' Mill.

- May 19, 1862 Lincoln revokes Gen Hunter's slave emancipation; reserves that right for himself; reminds nation of existing option of compensated emancipation; pleads for states to consider this option; they will not
- May 20, 1862 Lincoln signs Homestead Act; gives 160 acres west of the Mississippi to anyone willing to stay on the land for 5 years (soldiers, 1 year) and improve it; by 1934 160,000,000 homesteads will be given
- May 24, 1862 Peninsula: 6 miles from Richmond Gen McClellan surrounds the city on the north and east
- May 24, 1862 Fearing for DC's safety, Lincoln pulls Gen McDowell's forces from Gen McClellan; Confed Gen Stonewall Jackson's ability to surprise and defeat larger forces in the Valley still cause worry in DC
- May 29, 1862 After Shiloh Confed Gen Beauregard retreated 22 miles south to Corinth, MS; he cannot hold this key railroad town - water is scarce, disease is rampant in his army, enemy force is large; he retreats
- May 31, 1862 Union Gen Halleck enters Corinth, takes its vital railroad crossing of the Mobile & Ohio and the Memphis & Charleston; these railroads cross the length and width of the Confederacy
- May 31, 1862 - June 1, 1862 Peninsula: Gen Johnston attacks Gen McClellan in the inconclusive battle of Seven Pines/Fair Oaks near Richmond; Gen Johnston severely wounded; about 11,000 casualties
- June 1, 1862 Peninsula: Gen Lee replaces Gen Johnston; Johnston's army is now named the Army of Northern VA; Lee will be its most famous commander; he retreats into Richmond; McClellan waits
- June 6, 1862 Memphis falls to Union in naval battle; 8 boat Confed Mississippi River flotilla is defeated and eliminated largely due to Union inventor Charles Ellet's rams; Mississippi is open south to Vicksburg
- June 6, 1862 In the west Union Gen Grant decides to remain in the army; incompatibility with his chief, Gen Halleck, had pushed him to the verge of retiring; his friend Gen Sherman has persuaded him to stay
- June 8-9, 1862 Shenandoah Campaign ends with battles of Cross Keys(8<sup>th</sup>) and Port Republic(9<sup>th</sup>); Union forces withdraw down the Valley; Confed Gen Jackson's forces will go east to join Lee against McClellan
- June 12, 1862 Peninsula: Lee sends flamboyant Confed cavalryman Jeb Stuart and 1200 men to scout McClellan's left flank; Stuart does and continues to ride around McClellan's army; hero in Richmond
- June 17, 1862 In the west Gen Bragg replaces Gen Beauregard, who becomes commander of Dept of GA and SC
- June 17, 1862 Congress passes Land Grant Act (First Morrill Act) transferring all public lands to loyal states; money raised from sale of lands is to establish colleges for "agriculture and mechanic arts"
- June 19, 1862 Lincoln signs bill forever prohibiting slavery in US territories, then 40% of US land; few slaves there
- June 25-July 1, 1862 Lee aggressively fights McClellan near Richmond in the Seven Days Battles – Oak Grove, Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Savage's Station, Frayser's Farm, Malvern Hill; about 36, 000 casualties
- June 27, 1862 Peninsula: Gaines Mill, largest battle of the Seven Days, Confeds break through Union lines; McClellan starts retreat to Harrison's Landing on James River; Richmond is safe; 15,000casualties
- June 27, 1862 Peninsula: Gaines Mill, Lee's 7pm assault largest of war, perhaps 32,000 men (Pickett's at Gettysburg about 12,000); 1<sup>st</sup> time both Union and Confed armies use observation balloons in battle
- June 29, 1862 Peninsula: at Savage's Station Lee has last chance to destroy Army of the Potomac; fails
- July 1, 1862 Peninsula: Union army is at Malvern Hill a few miles north of Harrison's Landing; its expert artillery disables Confed artillery, destroys attacking Confed infantry; is aided by gunboats; 8000 casualties
- July 2, 1862 Peninsula Campaign ends: Army of the Potomac reaches Harrison's Landing; south is exuberant; north is devastated

### Historical Society of East Hartford

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**Jan Newsletter Deadline: Dec 28, 2012**



### Sept Dinner/Program

**Date:** Wednesday, Nov 14

**Time:** 7pm

**Where:** Raymond Library

**Program:** "Leatherman"