

Historical Society of East Hartford

Newsletter, March 2016



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As Spring draws near, one of the chief signs of its eminent approach (besides Passover and Easter) is the change to Day-Light Savings.

I thought to take some space here as a reminder that Daylight Savings Time begins on March 13th (Spring Forward!) and began by looking up the history of DST. I was surprised to learn that the history of Standard Time in the United States began November 18, 1883, when both **United States** and **Canadian** railroads instituted **standardized time in time zones**. Before then, the time of day was a local matter with most cities and towns using some form of local **solar time** (read: sundials) and the use of Standard Time gradually increased because of its obvious practical advantages for communication and travel.

Another surprise! What we now accept as Daylight Saving Time did not have its beginnings here in the United States. During **World War I**, in an effort to conserve fuel, **Germany** began observing DST on May 1, 1916. The rest of Europe soon followed. The plan was not adopted in the United States until the **Standard Time Act of March 19, 1918**, which established our 4 **standard time zones** and set Summer DST to begin on March 31, 1918. The idea was unpopular and Congress abolished DST after the war, overriding President **Woodrow Wilson's** veto. DST became a local option and was observed in some states until **World War II**, when President **Franklin Roosevelt** instituted year-round DST, called "War Savings Time", on February 9, 1942. It lasted until the last Sunday in September 1945. After 1945 many states and cities east of the Mississippi River (and mostly north of the Ohio and Potomac Rivers) adopted summer DST.

From 1945 to 1966 there was no federal law on daylight saving time, so localities could choose when it began and ended, or drop it entirely. By 1962, the transportation industry found the lack of consistency confusing enough to push for federal regulation. The result was the **Uniform Time Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-387)**. Beginning in 1967, the act mandated standard time within the established time zones and provided for advanced times. The newly created **Department of Transportation (DOT)** was given power to enforce the law. As of 2014 the following states and territories are not observing DST: Arizona, Hawaii, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Island.

In 1986, Congress enacted P.L. 99-359, amending the **Uniform Time Act** by changing the beginning of DST to the first Sunday in April and having the end remain the last Sunday in October. How interesting that much of this all happened in most of our membership's lifetimes.

One change that is happening in our current administration is the loss of our Membership Chair, Fern Strong. Fern was a long time member of the Historical Society and became our Membership Chair when Eileen Driscoll became our Secretary. Fern is leaving Connecticut to become a resident of Vermont where her sister already belongs to an artist's commune. Knowing Fern's artistic talents, this is a great transition for her. We will miss Fern's administrative skills and her sage input on the Board. But, we do wish her well in her new endeavors and hope she pays us a visit when she is here visiting her family. In the near future, we hope to appoint another Chair for Membership to replace Fern.

Once again, the Historical Society has committed to Connecticut Open House Day which takes place at two different locations both conducted by the Historical Society of East Hartford. The Connecticut Office of Tourism

is sponsoring the 12th annual Connecticut Open House Day on Saturday, June 11th. The one-day statewide event is designed to showcase Connecticut's diverse world of history, art, and tourism. A great way for residents to discover or rediscover all that is happening in our state. More information on participation of our membership will be discussed at the March meeting.

Bette Daraskewich, HSEH President

MARCH 16th PROGRAM ON CONNECTICUT CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

The Historical Society is glad to have as its guest speaker Civil War enthusiast and collector Buck Zaidel (right) who will present a PowerPoint slide show on a new book that he co-authored with independent historian and writer Dione Longley called Heroes for All Time; Connecticut Civil War Soldiers Tell Their Stories. The book focuses on Soldiers from Connecticut telling their own personal experiences and stories derived from letters and diaries. The book also includes rare period photographs, many that have never been previously published.



According to the 2015 Fall Connecticut History Review, "The narrative is brought to life through the authors' use of well-chosen first-person accounts that illustrate the soldiers' emotions and experiences, and gives this book an intimacy lacking

in many histories of the war." The book uses choice excerpts of the written word, period photographs, and unique objects to tell the role of soldier's experiences in the most intimate manner.



Corporals' Mess, 26th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry.
Image copied from Buck Zaidel's book jacket with his permission.

Following a short 7:00pm business meeting, the Wednesday March 16th program will be held at the Raymond Library, 840 Main Street, East Hartford. Light refreshments will be served. Plenty of free parking is available in the back of the Library.

For any questions, please call Craig Johnson at 860-568-2884.

Craig Johnson, Vice President/Program Chair

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

We'll have more detailed information in the May 2016 Newsletter but for now please diary the following activities and dates coming up in June. The Connecticut Forest & Park Association Trails Day Event is scheduled for the weekend of June 4th and 5th. I would like us to participate again, this time offering a walk along the Hockanum River Linear Park Trail and include a tour of Center Cemetery. Ruth Shapleigh-Brown and I will be co-leaders of this walk. The 12th Annual Connecticut Open House Day is on Saturday, June 11th. On this state-wide event for tourism, we open up the Huguenot House from 1 to 4 in the afternoon for tours. Because of the state publicity, this is our busiest day and we need volunteers for self-guided tours of the Blacksmith Shop and School House. Please consider helping us out on that day.

Craig Johnson

COLT'S EAST HARTFORD CONNECTIONS

Bill Doak, publisher of our town's Gazette, recently sent the following in an email to HSEH President Bette Daraskevich. The newsletter he mentions refers to the formative work now being done in accordance with NPS requirements for setting up Coltsville National Historical Park on the old Colt manufacturing site and surrounding relevant areas in Hartford¹.

While these lands are in Hartford there are East Hartford connections to be recognized. East Hartford's John Larson, US Representative, was the sponsor of the bill establishing the park. More connections are listed in Bill's email. If anyone knows of other East Hartford connections to Colt, the factory, the family, the workers, etc please email the HSEH at hseh@hseh.org. It would help if you put "Coltsville" in the email subject line.



This section of an old map shows Willow Brook (in the north of the section) and a street heading west toward the Ferry on the CT River. This would seem to be today's Colt St. At its corner is 'Mrs Colt' building. On the street heading south from this road is a building labeled 'Mrs. Colt' and further south is an area labeled 'Brick Yd'. Photo by Bill Knose.

²From Bill "...Judging by the newsletter they should be aware of East Hartford's many ties and connections to the Colt manufacturing plant, from the Colt family home and brickyard down by the river (seen on old town maps, approx. where the Hartford Canoe Club is) the Colt Landing where workers took a ferry across the Ct River to and from work). Colt's claim to fame as father of the modern manufacturing line with interchangeable precision parts when he made the Colt revolver in the 1840s. But that was in Patterson, NJ. He did not build his Hartford plant until 1855. East Hartford can claim precedence. Henry Pitkin (buried in Center Cemetery) was age 25 when he and his brother founded the Pitkin Watch Company in 1836. They made 50 or so pocket watches in the 1830s using precision-manufactured interchangeable parts. The watch company was short-lived but the concept of precision manufacturing was not an unfamiliar one to the East Hartford Pitkins. As you know they were a family of metal workers.

Bill Doak, Gazette"

¹ For a quick overview of progress in setting up the Coltsville National Park see <http://ctmirror.org/2015/12/28/plans-for-coltsville-national-park-hit-some-bumps-in-first-year-2/> ; "Coltsville Bill Moves Forward" <http://ctmirror.org/2016/02/03/coltsville-bill-fix-moves-forward/>

² Sectional image was cropped from the photo of a privately owned old map with a sales sticker marked '1869'. This old map matches the antique map found in the Atlas Hartford City and County 1869, "Hockanum, East Burnside, Naubuc and Vicinity District", published by Baker and Tilden in 1869. Image of this antique "Hockanum..." map can be seen on Historic Map Works, <http://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/3978/Hockanum,+East+Burnside,+Naubuc+and+Vicinity+District/>

**HSEH MEMBERSHIP DUES PAST DUE
SEPT 1, 2015 – AUG 31, 2016**

January 2016 was the past due date for members to pay their 2015-2016 dues. Unfortunately some members have still not paid their dues. For those in arrears on their HSEH memberships please do send in your dues to the Historical Society. The Society depends on your financial support to keep doing our community projects, sharing our town's rich history, paying for programs open to the public, and keeping our historical buildings open. Thank you.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____ CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
EMAIL: _____ EMAIL NEWSLETTER? Y ___ N ___

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ \$15.00 / Individual, \$20.00/All at one address,
\$10.00 / Student, \$50.00/Patron

Make a check for membership out to: The Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc.
Mail check to: Historical Society of East Hartford, Inc., Po Box 380166, East Hartford, CT, 06138-0166

Historical Society of East Hartford

Mail: PO Box 380166, E Hartford, CT, 06138-0166

Phone: 860-528-0716

Email: hseh@hseh.org, webmaster@hseh.org

Web site: <http://www.hseh.org>

Membership: 860-528-0716

indiv \$15, 1 address \$20, student \$10,
patron \$50

Deadline May Newsletter – Apr 29, 2016



March Program

Date: Wed, Mar 16, 2016

Time: 7:00pm

Program: Buck Zaidel –
Tinsmith Trade

Where: Raymond Library

Fee: No cost

Info: Craig, 860-568-2884

Image:

http://thumbs3.ebaystatic.com/d/1225/m/mkb50awntveZmMJ1Va33Z_Q.jpg