



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

MARCH 2014 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, 492 Main St., Portland, CT 06480
Tel: 860-342-5455 www.PortlandHistSoc.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER - Martha Lutecki

Happy Spring!! First of all, I'd like to thank Deb Ellsworth for an outstanding job serving as President of The Portland Historical Society for the past three years. She has done a wonderful job of keeping the Society moving forward, achieving our goals, coordinating Ways & Means, implementing a successful new fundraiser – The Festival of Wreaths, and so many other things such as working on exhibits, coordinating the Annual Town-Wide Tag Sales, attending town meetings as our representative, serving as a docent, and being a resource to all of us. She's a tough act to follow but I'll do my best!! I'd like to thank the returning Board members for agreeing to continue serving in leadership positions and also welcome our newest member, Shelli Lynn Nolan, as Corresponding Secretary and Docent Chairperson.

We've changed our program format and will no longer be holding monthly program meetings. Instead, we will hold about 4 programs per year in addition to our regular monthly museum openings on the first Sunday of each month. We hope to see many of you at our meetings and at the museum.

(Continued on page 6)

18th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale

The Society's 18th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale will be May 10th. Now is the time to look around your house and garage and decide whether or not you should have a tag sale to create space, make money, or just pass things on to others.

This town-wide event, publicized widely, is the Society's largest fundraiser of the year, and can be a fundraiser for you, your family or your organization. Many organizations have invented creative methods of raising money with so many shoppers visiting town from all over the state. You can support the Portland Historical Society with a small \$20 or \$25 donation and we will create a large map with all the sale locations and types of items to be found at each location. Non-profit organizations raising money get special highlights on the map. If you need a location, consider a sale at the Hemlock Grange parking lot. If you just want to donate items, the Society and other organizations will be collecting for their tag sales. *See page 7 for the Tag Sale sign-up form with all the details.*

(Continued on page 6)



40th-Anniversary Celebration

A large group of members and friends celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Portland Historical Society in November 2013 with cake, memories and Portland Jeopardy Trivia.

Thank you, Current Members and Donors

Business

Gary & Susan Colby-Buds
on Main St LLC
Portland Discount Liquors

Family

Bill & Kathi Ackerman
Alan & Joan Anderson
Scott & Karen Baker
Joseph & Marie Bordonaro
Harriet & Peter Bransfield
Elaine & Dick Carella
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Charles & Margaret Coe
Denis & Linda Cunningham
Mick & Fran Curran
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John & Sylvia LeShane
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Janet & Michael Nocek
Shelli-Lynn Nolan
John & Diane Otterbein
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Sanborn
Eugene & Shirley Sullivan

John & Eileen Sullivan
Bruce & Karen Tyler
Frank & Carol Winiski

Individual

Brien DeBari
Isabel Downing
Judith Gildersleeve duPont
Robinson T. Gilbert
Richard Kelsey
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Roselies Kutz
Judy Lane
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Karen Olson
Ellen Squier

Senior

Linda Agogliati
Julia Blauvelt
Charles & Nancy Bronson
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Terrance J. Hettrick
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Francis J. Kazeroid
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Luiza & Heather McDougall
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Lucile Chapman Richards
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Bill & Chris Sullivan
Donald A. Taylor
Kenneth & Jean Whatmore
Alfreda B. Wilson
Regina Woltmann
Susan Alyson Young

Membership questions?
Claire Frisbie 860-335-8581
PortlandCThistory@gmail.com

Annual Membership:
Student/Senior \$10,
Individual \$15, Family \$25,
Business \$50, Patron \$100.

Individual Life \$400.

HISTORY . . .

NOT ONE, BUT TWO WINDOWS INTO THE PAST... - Doris Sherrow-Heidenis

The following article from the Dec. 31, 1901 Hartford Courant (p.13) offers us a window into the world views of both 1901, when the donation of this indenture was made, and 1795, when this indenture for an 11-year-old black girl named Mina was executed.

The two people written up in the Hartford Courant in 1901 for their generosity to the Middlesex County Historical Society, are Almira Overton (1824-1907) and her sister, Ellen C. Morgan (1828-1906). They were the daughters of Augustin Overton, and the granddaughters of Seth Overton. They had found this document in cleaning out a family attic, and they perceived its importance.

Seth Overton (1759-1852) lived at **492 Main Street** - now the home of the *Portland Historical Society* - during the time of Mina's indenture. Overton had fled to Portland at age 17 when the British invaded his home in Long Island in 1776. He had not actually fought in the Revolution, but he had served as a government procurement officer, coordinating the food, clothing, and arms that were needed in the field. He is one of the reasons that Connecticut became known as the "Provision State." Mina's indenture would have come to an end in late 1804 when she turned 21.

The Hartford Courant ; Dec. 30, 1901; pg. 13 - from *ProQuest Historical Newspapers - 1887-1922*.

MIDDLETOWN. INTERESTING RELIC OF THE DAYS OF SLAVERY.

Presented to the Historical Society.

The following very interesting relic of the days when slavery existed here is one of a considerable number presented to the Middlesex County Historical Society by **Miss Almira Overton [1]** and **Mrs. Ellen C. Morgan [2]** of Portland, who are granddaughters of the **Seth Overton [3]** mentioned. He was originally a deep water captain and later was a ship builder, having his yard just below where the Gildersleeve yard is now. Later he was a general in the Connecticut militia. Mary Alsop was, it is stated, the great-grandmother of the present Joseph W. Alsop. The paper is:

This indenture, made on the 25th day of February, A. D. 1795, --witness, That **Mary Alsop [4]** of Middletown, in the county of Middlesex, and state of Connecticut, hath this day bound to Seth Overton of Chatham in the county and state aforesaid, a certain negro girl of the name of **Mina [5]**, to live with, and serve him, the said Seth Overton, until the said Mina shall be of the age of 21 years. He, the said Seth Overton, covenanting and engaging on his part, for the services of said Mina, to furnish her with good wholesome food and clothes decent and proper, for summer and winter; for week days and holy days; and instruct her in reading, writing, household business, sewing, knitting and spinning; to provide for her in sickness, to teach her the principles of morality and the Christian religion; and at the expiration of such

time, to give her two good suits of clothes. The said Mina shall faithfully serve him during her said apprenticeship, and the said Seth Overton further covenanted and engageth that he will not treat said Mina cruelly or inflict on her any punishment unnecessarily severe. That he will not sell said Mina's services without the consent of the said Mary Alsop, or her heirs; and that he will not at all sell or dispose of said Mina's services during said apprenticeship, or any part thereof, to any person who is not an inhabitant, and resident within the state of Connecticut, during the time of said Mina's apprenticeship. And the said Mary Alsop on her part doth covenant and engage that the said Mina is at this time of sound health and constitution and free from any disease or distemper, and that the said Mary Alsop hath good right to dispose of her the said Mina and to hire her in the manner aforesaid. And it is further agreed between the parties to this indenture that the said Mary Alsop is not to be answerable to the said, Seth Overton for any further laws which the Legislature of Connecticut may enact that may in any manner affect the said Mina, in witness whereof we have hereunto interchangeably set our hands and seals in the city of Middletown, the day and year above written. Signed and sealed in the presence of Mason P. Cogswell and T. Dwight; Mary Alsop, Seth Overton.

The above mentioned Mina was born the 20th day of December A.D. 1783. Mason Cogswell, Theodore Dwight, Mary Alsop, Seth Overton.

See researcher's notes on page 4.

HISTORY (continued from page 4)

Research Notes by Doris Sherrow-Heidenis

[1] **Almira Overton** would have been 77 in 1901 when she donated this indenture to the Middlesex County Historical Society. She was the 1824 daughter of Augustin & Almira Overton, and had lived in this area her entire life.

[2] **Mrs. Ellen C. Morgan** would have been 73 in 1901. She was the 1828 daughter of Augustin & Almira Overton.

[3] In 1795, when this agreement was signed, **Seth Overton** would have been 36, married, with a family. He had emigrated to Portland from Long Island as a 17-year-old in 1776 and served in the Continental Army.

[4] **Mary Alsop** would have been about 55 in 1795. She was then the widow of Richard Alsop (1726-1776) and had been for quite a few years. She died in 1829 at the age of 89.

[5] **Mina**, born 12/20/1783, would have just turned 11 when this February 1795 transaction occurred.

Painting of Hart/Jarvis House Found in Las Vegas, Nevada



The Society was contacted recently regarding a painting with “Elmcrest Manor - 1940” written on the back. Carol McCready Kerner from Las Vegas, Nevada bought the painting by Charles Stepule several years ago and discovered in researching it that we were campaigning to save the building. She emailed us to find out more information and graciously sent us a photo of the painting.

Charles Stepule (1911-2006) was born in Wallingford, Connecticut to Charles and Mary Yokim Stepule. He studied at the National Academy of Design, the Connecticut League of Art Students, the New York Art Students League and in various studios in England, France, Spain and Italy. For many years he also taught at the East Hartford (Connecticut) Art League. During World War II, he served in the Army. Stepule was a renowned artist and was known for his love of New England scenes, especially for his harbor paintings of Gloucester and Rockport, Massachusetts.

In 1958, he established the Charles T. Stepule Gallery, the oldest gallery on Bearskin Neck, in Rockport, MA. He had a very long and successful career in Rockport with his gallery and painted in the area for almost 70 years.

The mystery that remains is why the artist happened to paint the Hart/Jarvis House and whether he painted any others of the Portland area. The other mystery is how this painting found its way to Nevada! It is wonderful to see this lovely 1940 view of the Elmcrest campus.

In 2012, the Hart/Jarvis House was listed on the National Register as part of the Marlborough Street Historic District. This district includes 9 prominent and historic houses - the Erastus Brainerd House, the John Sage House, the two octagon houses and two worker houses across the street among others. The Society and the town continue to encourage the present owners of the Elmcrest property to consider redevelopment with historic preservation of these important structures.



Bridge Model on Display

The prize-winning model of the Charles J. Arrigoni Bridge, built by Joseph C. Virgadula, joins the River Crossings Exhibit at the Ruth Cal-lander House Museum of Portland History. In addition, the museum's new exhibit, "40 years of Collecting Portland's History" commemorating the Portland Historical Society's 40th anniversary, is now open. On display are many varied items from the Society's large collection.

Tiger Scouts Tour Museum

A small and lively group of tiger scouts, parents and their leader, Cindy Mazzota, visited the museum in January. Claire Frisbie (pictured) provided a narrated tour and Portland history lesson with the assistance of other docents. Tom Ladny operated the trains and trolley on display. The scouts discussed their families' local histories. During the visit, several of the Scouts became student members of the Historical Society.



"Jingle & Mingle" — a Success!

The Society's second annual Festival of Wreaths was held the weekend of December 7 and 8 at the Carriage House behind 329 Main Street. Celebrating forty years since the Society's founding, we set a goal of forty wreaths and reached it! Everyone who stopped by was overwhelmed with the beauty and variety of this year's wreaths — from Barbie and the Grinch to jingle bells and marshmallow snowmen — each one was a hit. Many thanks to the local organizations, businesses and friends of the Society who so generously decorated and donated the wreaths to make the Festival a successful fundraiser. The Festival raised \$900.00 for the Ruth Cal-lander House restoration fund.

Plans are now in the works for the Third Annual Festival of Wreaths. Watch for more information in our fall newsletter and The Rivereast News Bulletin.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (continued from p. 1)

Right now our focus is on our Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale – our 18th – and we are looking for help with collecting, marking and setting up our Tag Sale in addition to help at the Grange the day of the sale. Please let Ruth (860-342-3636) or me know if you can help us in any way. I look forward to working with many of you over the next year and hope you will call me with any questions or ideas at 860-342-3212 or email me at mlutecki@yahoo.com.

18th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale

(continued from p. 1)

Volunteers are needed (and appreciated!) for this event. Help is needed on the three collection Saturdays, April 19 and 26, and May 3, at the Callander House; to deliver and pick up poles; to bake; and on the day of the sale at the Callander House or the Grange. If you can donate a couple of hours before or during the tag sale, please contact Ruth at 860-342-3636 or attend the **Tag Sale organizational meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 pm at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History.**



Ruth Callander House Restoration

The chimney repairs required opening a fireplace on the first floor that had been covered to supply a flue for the furnace. The fireplace was found to be original brownstone. A new flue liner was placed inside the fireplace, and to allow visitors to view the original brownstone, a brick base and wall were constructed around the liner. Stan Bates, the mason, did a wonderful job creating this unusual structure. When the weather improves, he will be rebuilding the entire top half of the chimney.

In loving memory of Historical Society members and supporters who passed away recently:

Jeannie Bastura
Constance Berggren
Grace Broberg
Eddie Chiabrero
Romanie Gussenhoven

Judith Hale
Charlotte Hanson
Jean Harmon
Bill Long
Joanne Luppi

Hazel Robinson
James Tierney
Norma Werdelin

We apologize if we have missed anyone and ask you to please contact us if we have not listed a loved one who was one of our supporters.

CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

Quarry Story children's book by Karen Enright \$12.95
Portland Scenes Tile\$12, **Mug**\$9.50
Portland Recipes and Reflections.....\$8
Letters to Harry by Pru Taylor and TJ Palmer.....\$25
Coloring & Activity Book of Portland History.\$3.50
Images of Portland by Bob McDougall.....\$20
St. Clements by Pru Taylor and TJ Palmer.....\$15

Antique Photo Postcards\$.75 each or 3/\$1
Antique Pictures Magnets ... \$2 ea, 3/\$5, set 20/\$30
Portland Scenes Notepad.. (50 pgs., 5 scenes) 2/\$3
Portland Scenes Tea Towel\$5

Please include \$2 shipping per \$10 of order
Purchases fund Society projects

Call 860-342-1927 to order or mail to: Portland Historical Society, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480



18th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale
Sponsored by The Portland Historical Society
Benefiting the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

PLAN A TAG SALE

Saturday, May 10th
8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

RAIN
OR SHINE

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

- ⇒ You profit from your sale.
- ⇒ The Historical Society will help to promote your Tag Sale.
- ⇒ Your contributions will help fund the Museum of Portland History.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE:

- ⇒ Location Maps with sale item types
- ⇒ Advertising
- ⇒ Tag Sale Hints
- ⇒ House Marker Sign

Option	How it works:	Rec'd by Society by April 12th	Rec'd by Society Apr. 13 - 26 <u>deadline</u>
1.	Have a sale at your own home or neighborhood <i>for your benefit</i> .	\$20.	\$25.
or 2.	Tailgate your tag sale at Hemlock Grange parking area, jct. Rte. 17 & Sage Hollow Rd	\$20.	\$25.
or 3.	Donate items to benefit the Historical Society tag sale at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. (No clothing, textbooks, TV's or unwieldy items, please.)	Items may be delivered to the Society Saturdays, April 19, 26, & May 3 at the Callander House garage, 492 Main St. from 9-11 AM. Pickup also available. Call 860-342-3636.	

ALSO BAKE & TAG SALES with coffee, soda & hot dogs at Hemlock Grange, 17 Sage Hollow Road on Tag Sale Day. *Questions? Contact 860-342-3636 or PortlandCThistory@gmail.com*



Clip and mail to Portland Historical Society Tag Sale, PO Box 98, Portland CT 06480
Make checks payable to: Portland Historical Society

Contact Information: Name: _____	Options (Please check all that apply)	BY April 12	April 13 - 26
Sale Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Home sale	\$20.	\$25.
Phone: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Grange (limit 2 spots per sale)	\$20.	\$25.
Email: _____	Item types (for map listing - 40 characters or less): _____		
Will you have Tag Sale if it rains? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> _____			
⇒ Must be received by April 26 for listing on Map ⇐			

CALENDAR . . .

Mar 25 - "Salt Cellars" program - Leslie Solkoske, a member of the New England Society of Open Salt Collectors, discusses table salts and the history of salt cellars, including some made in Connecticut (including Middletown and Meriden). Please bring any collectible salt cellars that you would like identified or just to show. Salt cellars have been around for centuries and were especially popular to collect around the first part of the 20th century (1930's and 1940's). They are still very collectible today, coming in all shapes, sizes and made of many different materials, such as silver, pewter, glass, stoneware and even shell.

Portland Senior Center - 7:30 p.m.

Apr 6, May 4, Jun 8, & groups by appointment - Portland History "40 Years of Collecting" exhibit - Museum open first Sunday, 2 to 4 p.m. or call Claire 860-335-8581 for appt.

Apr 8 - Town-Wide Tag Sale planning meeting, volunteers welcome - call Ruth at 860-342-3636 for information - *Ruth Callander House - 7 p.m.*

May 10 - 18th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale - map available at Ruth Callander House and online at www.PortlandHistSoc.org - 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Jun 14 - Connecticut Open House Day at Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History - open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Jun 24 - 3rd Annual Ice Cream Social and Van Beynum Awards, plus musical entertainment. *Portland Senior Center - 7 p.m.*



NEWSLETTER - *Claire Frisbie, 3-20-14, 860-335-8581*

March 2014 Newsletter!

FINANCE BOARD
 Pat Crowther
 James Elder
 George Law
 Volunteers needed

COLLECTORS BOARD
 Regina Wolmann
 Christine Sullivan
 Robert McDougall
 Phyllis Frisbie

TRUSTEES
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 Ruth Freeburg
 Claire Frisbie

DIRECTORS
 President - Martha Luteci
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 2nd Vice President - John Peterson
 Recording Secretary - vacant
 Corresponding Secretary - Shelli Nolan
 Treasurer - James McCabe

2013 SOCIETY OFFICERS

18TH ANNUAL TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE
SIGN-UP ENCLOSED!

NON-PROFIT ORG
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 MIDDLETOWN CT
 PERMIT NO 575

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480
 Address Service Requested

