



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

March 2019 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

492 Main St., Portland, CT 06480 Tel: 860-342-5455

www.PortlandHistSoc.com Email: PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com

Vol. 45 No. 1

THE 23RD ANNUAL TOWN-WIDE TAG SALES DAY IS COMING MAY 11!

Once again, we will create the terrific big map that tells all the visiting and local tag salers where to find you and your great stuff, distribute our poles and signs that identify your sale, and host our delicious bake and food sale which just gets tastier every year.

This town-wide event, publicized widely throughout the central CT area, can be a fundraiser for you, your family or your organization. Many organizations have invented creative strategies for raising money while so many shoppers are visiting town from all over the state.

You support the Portland Historical Society with a

small \$20 or \$25 donation to secure an authorized tag sale location on the official map. 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 on Sage Hollow Road.

If you just want to donate items, the Society and other town organizations will be collecting for their tag sales. Volunteers from the Society will be receiving items in good condition at the Ruth Callander House garage, 492 Main Street, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturdays, April 27 and May 4.

Sign up online at www.PortlandHistSoc.org OR see page 3 for the mail-in form.

This is the third in a series of articles on local businesses the purpose of which is to make our PHS members aware of the variety of Businesses and the People that own and operate them who have become the fabric of our Portland Community.

A PORTLAND FAMILY TRADITION

by George M. Gilbert III

Is a business destined for success because of passion and hard work, or does passion and hard work dictate business success?

World War II was winding down in 1945. Service men and woman were coming home and looking to start families, start careers, and create a fuller life that included recreational activities. This was an exciting period of time and there was optimism in the air after years of sadness and hardship. One of these men was Bill Petzold Sr. who was working at Hamilton Standard. Bill's job was considered so valuable that he served his country by helping make propellers and aircraft parts for the war effort. That was also the year that he started a small business in the basement of his house on Route 66 in Portland repairing outboard motors. Shortly thereafter Bill started building rowboats

(Continued on page 4)

STOCKING FARM'S SILO

From Past to Present

By Patty and Joe Pizzichemi

While house hunting in central Connecticut, we stumbled upon a real estate listing that showed an aerial view of a piece of property dotted with barns, outbuildings and a Cape Cod style home. We had been searching for months for an 18th century home, in move in condition, with at least one barn situated on a fairly large parcel of land. When we made an appointment to see it first hand, it was love at first sight. Our new home would soon become **Stocking Hill Farm** on upper Cox Road in Portland.

Soon after moving in, in early September 2016, we walked through all of the outbuildings and barns to determine which ones needed the most attention. Built in the mid 1850's, both the horse and dairy barn showed signs of wear and tear that needed im-

(Continued on page 5)

In this issue:

Activities & Hearth Cooking - pg 2

Calendar Events - pg 8

Petzold's Family Tradition - pgs 1, 4 - 5

Stocking Farm's Silo - pgs 1, 5 - 7

Town Wide Tag Sales Day - pgs 1, 3

Members and Donors to the Portland Historical Society – Thank you for your support!

*Membership supports our activities collecting, preserving and sharing
Portland's history.*

*If you would like to renew or join, information is available at
www.PortlandHistSoc.org or contact us at
PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com*

HEARTH COOKING at the Hall House

By Alexia Belperron

We hope you will join us for another round of hearth cooking at the Hall house. This March 10, we will cook some Irish recipes in honor of Saint Patrick's Day. It is sometimes difficult to discern the origins of recipes our forefathers used, but all seem to agree that Colcannon is uniquely Irish. A main ingredient of colcannon is potatoes and although they are not native to Ireland, the Irish along with the French were the first Europeans to embrace the potato. The earliest reference to colcannon appears to be from a 1735 diary of an Irish traveler. Both rich and poor ate colcannon, albeit with some different ingredients, and by the 1770's colcannon had also become a favorite of the wealthy English.

Colcannon traditionally contains potatoes, something from the "brassica" family of vegetables (so cabbage or kale), and something from the onion family. Richer recipes also included butter and or cream, and perhaps eggs as well as some spices, and maybe vinegar. Colcannon was originally cooked around Halloween and different traditions involve girls trying to predict when they would find a husband (some including a hanging a sock containing a spoonful of colcannon on their front doors to attract a suitors). As cabbage and potatoes, were also vegetables that kept through the long winter months, versions of colcannon were certainly eaten in late winter when few other options existed.



A Capella Singers from Portland High School at Festival

In past hearth cooking events we have compared apple pie recipes from the rich and the poor, so this time around we will do the same with colcannon. In addition, we will bake some Irish soda bread. The Irish were not known to have bread as a mainstay of their diets, so Irish soda bread most likely dates from the mid to late nineteenth century. We might also try our hands at some traditional Irish stew.

SOCIETY NEWS

The Society celebrated the holidays in December with a number of successful events.

Our 7th Annual Festival of Wreaths had 43 wreaths and table decorations donated. Many visitors enjoyed viewing the display and listening to the music, and of course, there were 43 lucky winners. Thanks to the Chair, Deb Ellsworth, the many volunteers who helped, and all the donors and attendees who made this a very successful fundraiser for the 7th year.

The Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History hosted an exciting holiday show of model trains including a number of intricate displays and even a model of the Ghost Train from the Airline Railroad. Our thanks go to the expert builders and operators of these wonderful train layouts - Tom Ladny, Mike Tierney, Peter Sulinski, Sandy Alonzo, Rob Larson, Harry Hansen – who created entertainment for many happy visitors of all ages.

Susanne Anderson-Woronoff was hosted at the Museum for several successful book signings of her newly published book, Portland Farms: Then and Now.

At our Annual Meeting in January, elections were held and our Executive Board was reelected to serve another year. Their dedication to the operation of the Portland Historical Society is greatly appreciated. The meeting then featured a speaker co-sponsored by the Portland Public Library. Author and historian, Marty Podskoch, discussed his new book, The Connecticut 169 Club: Your Passport and Guide to Exploring Connecticut.



23rd Annual Town-Wide Tag Sales

Sponsored by The Portland Historical Society
Benefiting the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

PLAN A TAG SALE

Saturday, May 11th

8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

RAIN
OR SHINE

RAIN
OR SHINE

Register online at www.PortlandHistSoc.org (starting March 30)
or use this form and mail - Questions? email: PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com

| <u>BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:</u> | | <u>THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE:</u> |
|--|---|--|
| ⇒ 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 | | ⇒ Location Maps with sale item types ⇒ Advertising ⇒ Tag Sale Hints ⇒ House Marker & Trail Number Sign |
| Pick | How it works: | Register by April 27 to be on Map |
| 1 | Have a sale at your own home or neighborhood <i>for your benefit</i> . | Registered by April 14 - \$20 Registered AFTER April 14 - \$25 |
| 2 | Tailgate your tag sale at Hemlock Grange parking area, jct. Rte. 17 & Sage Hollow Rd | Registered by April 14 - \$20 Registered AFTER April 14 - \$25 |
| 3 | Donate items to benefit the Historical Society tag sale at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. | Items may be delivered to the Society Saturdays, April 27, & May 4 at the Callander House garage, 492 Main St. from 9-11 AM. Pickup also available. Call 860-342-1927. |

ALSO BAKE & TAG SALES and food & drinks at Hemlock Grange, 17 Sage Hollow Rd on Tag Sale Day. Questions? Contact 860-342-1927 or PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com



Register online at PortlandHistSoc.org with credit card **OR** Clip form and mail to:

Portland Historical Society Tag Sale, P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480 - checks to: Portland Historical Society

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Contact Information Name: | Item types map listing - 40 characters MAX | By April 14 | AFTER April 14 |
| Sale Address: | <input type="checkbox"/> Home sale | \$20 | \$25 |
| Phone: | <input type="checkbox"/> Tailgate at Grange (limit 2/sale) | \$20 | \$25 |
| Email: | Will you have Tag Sale if it rains? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

A PORTLAND FAMILY TRADITION

(Continued from page 1)



***Bill, Sr and
Agnes Petzold***

and needed more space. Money was tight, time was tight, he was still working at Hamilton Standard and his fledging business was demanding time and money. Bill was able to locate a chicken coop that was for sale in Middletown and took it down piece by piece and reassembled it where dinosaur golf is today. This was his first building and now he was able to get the operation out of the cellar of his home.

Bill hired his first employee, Jimmy Foster, who lived on Grove Street, while still working at Hamilton Standard. The business was still growing and he needed the security of a full time job to support his family. His wife, Agnes, was a school teacher by day and she was bookkeeper in the new business by night. In 1946, Martin and Champion outboard motors dealership was added. However, Bill always wanted to sell Evinrude motors. He campaigned hard to get the line and received it in 1949. It was during this period Bill was making frequent trips traveling to the Bronx, NY to purchase kit boats at "U Make It". After picking up the kits, Petzold's would design, assemble, outfit, service and launch these vessels in Portland.

The 1950's economy was getting stronger and Bill kept selling larger boats that were manufactured by well known shipbuilders such as Pembroke and Trojan. By 1950, Wm. Petzold, Sr. was working full time at the business and the Riverview Street Extension property was purchased and developed. Agnes and Bill bought a house on Riverview Street Extension and built docks and a launch ramp. This is where the larger boats were launched. They were

brought down from their Rt 66 facility to the Connecticut River via a cabover truck with a heavy duty winch on it. Soon Petzold's Inc. was selling more boats than they could service. Bill Sr was now working full time at his business and ready to make a critical decision that would forever determine Petzold's continued success. The property of the former Gildersleeve Shipyard was available for purchase in 1959. Bill Sr. purchased the property and immediately started making improvements to the former shipyard.

What William Petzold Sr did not realize was that the land he was buying was rich in marine history. Giles Hall was a mariner, entrepreneur, and shipbuilder who owned other properties on the Connecticut River and a shipyard in Middle Haddam. Hall was granted by the General Assembly permission to purchase land from the Wangunk Indians in 1716. Hall built his house near Indian Hill around 1717. He planned and finished a road through the reservation that may have been used to transport materials for shipbuilding. Hall sold his house in 1739. Following Hall another shipbuilder George Lewis Sr purchased the property to built ships, It is documented that



Petzold's yards Circa 1970's.

Lewis built a 90 ton schooner and launched it in October 1740. Lewis continued building ships on the same tract of land for three generations, until the Lewis yard was sold to Sylvester Gildersleeve in 1838. The requirements of the Lewis workers were carpenters, joiners, and caulkers unlike the requirements of modern day boatyards of mechanics, fiberglass craftsman, electricians, etc. William Petzold

(Continued on page 5)

A PORTLAND FAMILY TRADITION

(Continued from page 4)

Company was continuing the tradition of using the same tract of land that was used by marine builders since 1717! Over 300 years of marine use. There are not many businesses that can stake claim to a lineage like that.

Bill Jr and his sister Elaine were brought up working in the family business. Elaine's husband Dick Cote worked as a yard foreman for years. After finishing college in 1962 Bill Jr. and his new bride Paula Sims lived above the Route 66 dealership. This meant that Bill Jr was working seven days a week since someone was always coming down for parts or service even when the business was officially closed. It was during this time that I was able to experience first hand the generosity of the Petzold's. Bill Sr. was active in the Portland Lions Club. The Lions Clubs primary goal is providing the gift of sight to those who cannot afford to be tested and fitted with glasses. My father was also a Lions Club member. Every year Bill Sr let the Lions Club use his property on Route 66 to sell Christmas Trees as a fundraiser to help the needy obtain eye care and glasses. He would also host picnics for club members in his empty boat sheds during the summer. The generosity of Petzold's continues to benefit the fabric of our community to this day.

Bill Jr continued on with the business navigating the transition from wooden vessels to fiberglass vessels during periods of economic boom and busts. Under his guidance the boat sales have expanded and Petzold's now has a presence for brokering vessels nationwide. Petzold's Inc. now represents the country's major marine shipbuilders and power units for just about any vessel made. Their Portland yard is a true working boat yard with an immense amount of talent to keep their customers satisfied.

On February 2, 2019, shortly before this article went to print, Bill Jr's wife Paula (Sims) Petzold passed away. Paula was an outstanding mother and role model to all her children, family and our community. We extend our sympathy and wish the Petzold family peace and comfort in their loss.

The completion of this article will be included in the next edition of the Portland Historical Society newsletter. We will be moving on to the talented following two generations of the Petzold family - **Bobby and Ken, and Heather and Dominic.**

Richard Cote; Bill Jr, Ken, Bob

STOCKING FARM'S SILO

(Continued from page 1)

mediate repair. We felt that, because of their condition, they needed to be the first priority on our list of restoration projects. We were very fortunate to find a local barn restorer, who for the past two years, saved our barns from further deterioration. Attached to the dairy barn was a dilapidated breezeway that connected a massive wooden silo to the barn. The silo was in relatively good shape, but it was missing its roof cap, doors, and chute. We contacted the previous owner, Karen Storo, who informed us that the roof cap had been blown off in the hurricane of 2011. To our surprise, while we were exploring in one of the barns, we discovered neatly stacked in the corner, the complete set of all seventeen original 21 by 17 inch doors complete with intact hardware and ladder rungs! We were overjoyed, but disappointed that there was no sign of the roof cap or chute. After much thought, we decided to replace these pieces, down the road, since the silo itself was overall in sound structural condition.

Well, on the morning of November 10, 2017, after a strong windstorm the night before, our plans came to a screeching halt. We looked outside our window, and to our horror, saw that the silo was drastically leaning to one side. Our hearts sank, to say the least. As we approached the wind torn sight, several of the silo boards were strewn across the yard, and the breezeway was ripped from the barn causing the silo to lean without a support. Neighbors began calling to notify us of the sad news and to offer their condolences - they seemed just as upset as we were. Joe and I stood there in a fog for a few minutes and assessed the damage. We knew we had only two choices - tear it down or rebuild it. It didn't take very long to decide its fate. We both looked at each other and agreed that come heck or high water, it had to be **SAVED!** The next question was by whom, how and

(Continued on page 6)



STOCKING FARM'S SILO

(Continued from page 5)



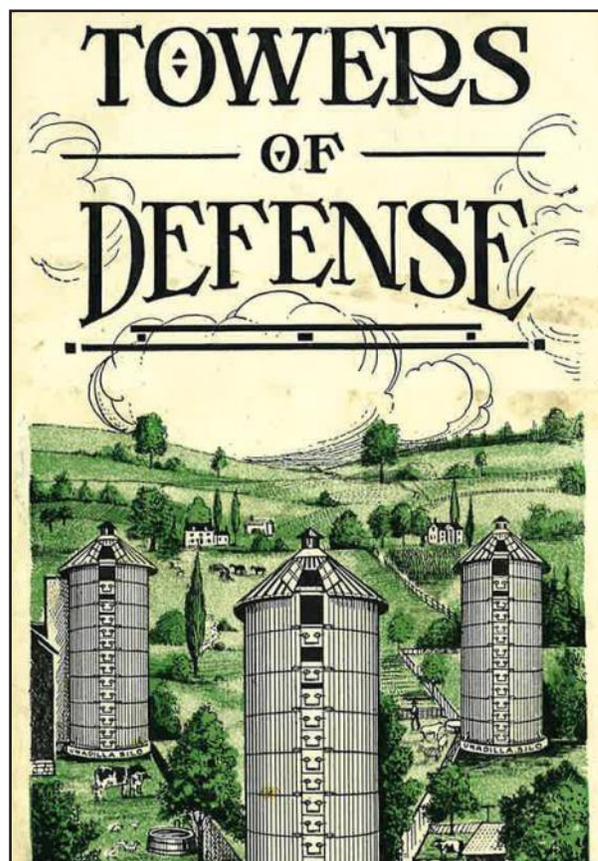
Silo after the November 2017 storm

when? It's not a project where you can just go through the yellow pages and find a carpenter who specializes in restoring early wooden silos. After much research, however, Joe discovered a company in Lancaster, PA who had experience building and repairing wooden silos, but not of this specific type. They were willing to take the drive to look at it, but it would be several months before they could actually start the job. So, Joe dug some more and finally found a small family run business in Canajoharie, located in Otsego County, NY that specialized in the construction of this exact model. After several conversations with the owner, he decided to drive the 177 mile journey to check it out. Mac Hyney and Sons were coming to our rescue!

Shortly after, on a snowy afternoon in December, Mac pulled up in a beat up old truck with parts held together with duct tape and plastic ties. He removed his well-worn tractor cap and greeted us with a warm smile and a firm handshake. Just by looking at him, one could tell that he had worked hard his entire life. His hands were strong, rough, and callused. His face was weather-beaten and aged. He was proud, though, to share that he was in his 70's and still climbing silos! Mac surveyed the damage to the silo while we

silently tried to read his mind by his expressions. We finally broke out and asked him if he could bring the poor silo back to life. He looked at us with confidence, a twinkle in his eye, and assuredly said, "I have been building wooden silos since I was a kid, and mostly this kind." We were ecstatic to say the least! Mac then went on to tell us about our silo.

In 1842, the Van Cott family began selling lumber in Unadilla, a small farming community in upstate New York. In 1906, they built their first wooden silo which came to be known as the Unadilla Silo. Most of these were built in the early 20th century. They were preceded by the first upright silo that was built in 1873 by Fred Hatch in McHenry County, Illinois. Two decades later, they became popular throughout the eastern United States. Wooden silos opened the door to year-round dairying to keep up with the demands of a growing dairy industry, and the need for more efficient methods of storing winter fodder. They also produced higher quality feed/dairy products. Feeding expenses and labor, in addition, were on the



Unadilla Silo advertising brochure c. 1900

rise, "Mounting to heights never thought possible". It was highly economical and profitable to own a silo, especially for dairy and stock raising farms. The Unadilla Silo was referred to as, "Towers of Defense". It alleviated the burden of having to purchase high-

(Continued on page 7)

STOCKING FARM'S SILO

(Continued from page 6)

priced mill feeds during winter months, as well as lessened the worries associated with a short hay crop, summer drought, or the destruction of crops by an early frost.

And so, on a cold morning in February of 2018, Mac, his 15 year-old grandson, and a helper pulled up with a flatbed trailer loaded with the tools of their trade and set up shop in the big barn. The day had finally arrived! They began dismantling the silo, board by board, hoop by hoop, and nail by nail. They salvaged whatever useable boards they could and began reconstructing it on the original foundation using new boards (which would eventually fade to match the existing ones) where needed. They worked from morning until dusk Monday through Friday on snow covered ground, often in the rain, sleet, and chilly temperatures until the project was completed. To keep them energized, motivated, and comfortable, I would make them warm chili, soups, coffee and hot chocolate. As they kept inching towards the top, I would have to place the comfort foods and beverages in a bucket that they would hoist up with a rope. They were very appreciative, especially when I offered to wash and dry their clothes, and hand them dry towels when it rained! I felt a need to take care of "The Boys".

Within a few weeks, they finally reached the top and placed the new cap roof in position. It was such an exciting moment! They even added a metal chute, and installed the original doors which fit like gloves. Our Unadilla was completed - it was a sight to behold, a masterpiece. Despite the harsh weather conditions, this hearty, skilled, and talented trio persevered, saving a piece of history that will last for generations to come (that's only if mother nature and her hurricanes keep their distance!) We took lots of pictures, did



Mac Hyney and grandson, Noah, on completed silo

high-fives and celebrated by having homemade chicken parmesan (their favorite) at our kitchen table. The following day, they packed up their belongings and equipment, we gave each other big hugs, shed a few tears, and waved goodbye as they drove off into the distance. Not only did we now have a beautifully restored silo, but we also made life-long friends with stories and memories to share. We hope to visit them the next time we are in their neck of the woods. Mac said his wife Martha, who is the best cook in town, wants to make us a huge delicious meal. The offer sounds too good to refuse!

Wooden silos tell a story of hard working farmers who made their living without the convenience of modern day farming equipment and machinery. Silos have been a part of our landscape and rural communities for generations. Unfortunately, since it is often no longer feasible to preserve them, many have fallen into disrepair. Harsh weather conditions, neglect, lack of appreciation, development, and other factors have led to their demise. It gives us great pleasure, to look out our window, and see our Unadilla Silo standing as it did 100 years ago. Friends and family often ask "So, now what are you going to use the silo for- perhaps a converted living space with windows and a spiral staircase?" "You know, this is a very popular trend these days". Our reply is always very simple, "We are going to leave it just the way it is". To us, it is a symbol of hard working and dedicated individuals who lived and made their living on Stocking Farm as well as other farms throughout Portland. It is an incredible piece of architecture and ingenuity. It is truly a treasure that must be preserved.



Patty Pizzichemi and Mac Hyney

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR

Mar 10 - Hearth Cooking Demo/Museum Open 2-4 pm

Mar 25 - Portland Library History Program - Michèle LaRue presents the historical performance:

GETTYSBURG : ONE WOMAN'S WAR - Three stories from Elsie Singmaster's classic *Gettysburg*

- ♦ **“July the First”**: War comes to Gettysburg—where are the armies?
- ♦ **“The Battleground”**: Lincoln comes to Gettysburg—where will it end?
- ♦ **“Mary Bowman”**: Sightseers come to Gettysburg—where has it led?

In Singmaster's powerful and specific exploration of a Civil War icon's physical and emotional terrain, fictional towns-woman, Mary Bowman, lives the war and its legacy—from the first shots at Willoughby Run to the consolation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, to the country's healing a half century on.

Apr 27, May 4 - Tag Sale Collections Days - Ruth Callander House garage

May 11 - 23rd Annual Town-Wide Tag Sales Day

June 8 - Museum Open Day 11 am - 3 pm



Petzold's new showroom c. 1960

See *“A Portland Family Tradition”* inside

NEWSLETTER - Editor: Claire Frisbie, 3-4-2019,
PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com 860-335-8581

Printing by DEL Printing, LLC, 42 Gospel Lane, Portland, CT - 860-342-2959

March 2019 Newsletter!

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23rd Annual Town-Wide Tag Sales – May 11

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