

# AMITY & WOODBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

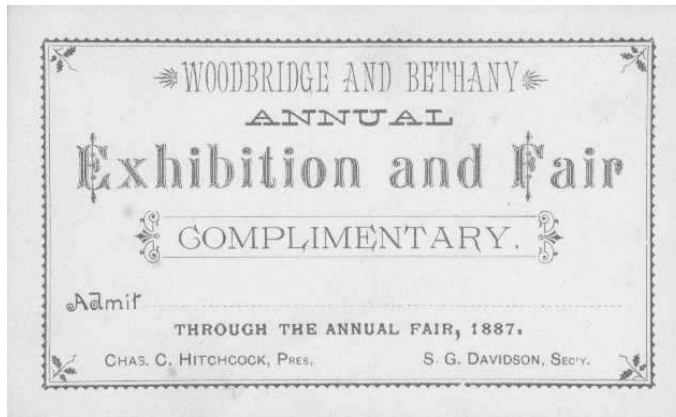
Spring

April

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## **Society loans John Will pewter flagon to Yale**

The board of Directors unanimously voted to place our rare and precious 18th century pewter Communion flagon on display at the Yale Art Gallery for a term of 5 years.

Daniel and Esther Beecher gave the flagon to the Church of Christ in Bethany, in 1771, while Stephen Hawley was minister. The flagon was donated to the Society in 1979. It had been given back to the family in the 19th century, presumably because it was no longer being used, and given to us by a relative. We have always revered it, but had no idea as to its real importance until it was spotted on the pantry shelf of the Darling House by David Barquist, Assoc. Curator at YAG. He felt certain it was a Will piece, but could not find a mark. Sometime later Martha German and Polly Schulz loaded it into their car and brought it down to a lecture on American Pewter at New Haven Colony Historical Society. The lecturer was the late John Carl Thomas, world authority on pewter.

**Flagon** continued on page 2

## **Spring Meeting to feature Oral History Farm and Home life remembered**

PARISH HOUSE,  
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY APRIL 25, 1999 2-4PM

Departing from our usual format of a Thursday evening meeting, we hope you'll take a break from your yards and gardens to come and hear firsthand what life was like in Woodbridge back when farms were still plentiful. We are trying to assemble a group of folks representing the Dairy, Chicken, and Market Garden farms, along with some folks who have had the pleasure of living here for most of their lives, but not in the farm trade.

Come and hear what it was like before paved roads, electricity, and indoor plumbing. When fresh milk and produce were brought to the city daily and sold along

He saw it from across the room, and positively identified it as a John Will creation.

Polly and Muffy brought it back, but moved it from the bottom shelf to the top shelf, out of easy reach. It was listed on our 1989 Insurance appraisal at about \$925. A more up to date figure might be in the neighborhood of \$100,000!!

Ignorance is bliss. Now that we know what it is and what it's worth, we worry about it all the time! The Board felt that in order to keep it as safe as possible, while having it available for everyone to view, a long term renewable loan agreement would be the best thing to do.

So we did! The flagon is at the museum, and will soon reside in the pewter case in the Garvin Collection of American Decorative Arts at the Gallery. Ellie Jones and I escorted it down to New Haven to make sure it arrived safely, then toured the Garvin Collection. We both agreed the flagon will be the most attractive piece in the case.

We will be doing some good publicity with YAG in the near future. Look for an article in the New Haven Register and the Newtown Bee.

## Flagpole Dedication Ceremony

Sylvia Berrie was devoted to the history of her town, state and nation. She was president of the Society during the early years of our acquisition and move to the Darling House. She was an active Board member, serving in various capacities including Tag Sale coordinator and Historian. She was equally active in her Church and community. She was our friend. We wanted to memorialize her in a special way. Because of her patriotism and love of the flag, we decided to install a flagpole at the Darling House in her honor.

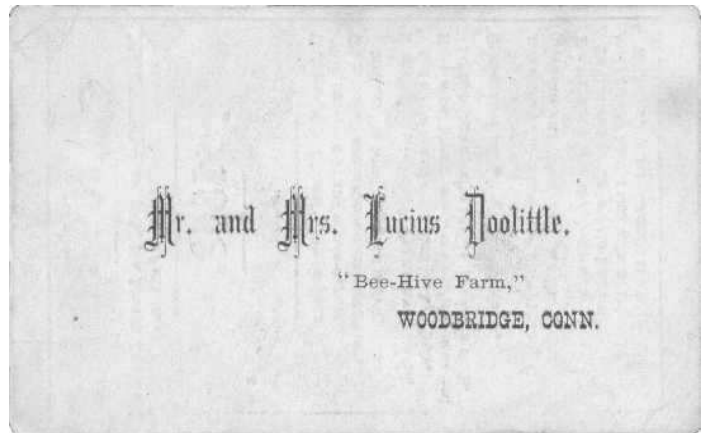
We set out to ask Charlie Whiting (BSA Troop 63 Founder and Committee Chairman), if he could find an appropriate cedar tree across the street in the

vicinity of the Scout camp. Charlie not only found us the tree, but he found us an Eagle Scout candidate to supervise and oversee every step of the project. His name is Charles Correll III; a longtime Woodbridge resident recently removed to Orange. Charlie C. worked out every detail, including where the pole should be, how tall, how to secure it to the ground, how to rig it, what flag to fly, etc.

Both Charlies helped rally the troops to prepare the pole, haul it across the busy street, and get it in the ground. Charlie C. and I raised the flag for the first time at our Holiday Open House in December, with the Amity High School Chamber Singers singing the Star Spangled Banner.

Now we would like to invite you to the official dedication ceremony planned for Sunday, June 13 at 12:30 in the afternoon. We purposely chose this date because it is the day before Flag Day, and just seemed like the right thing to do.

The Rev. Boyd Johnson from the First Church of Christ will give a Prayer of Dedication, members of Sylvia's family may speak, and Charlie Correll will raise the flag, which is an exact replica of the first official flag of the United States. The Society will provide refreshments afterwards. We have had a small bronze plaque attached to a fieldstone, which will be placed securely at the foot of the pole. This event will take place rain or shine. We'll simply hold off on the flag



25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary card ca. 1868.  
Bee Hive Farm now Shepherd's Farm

## **New Caretaker at Museum**

We are pleased to announce that we have a new caretaker at the Darling House. His name is Jim Mosley, and he moved in during the month of March.

Jim has already spruced up the apartment with a fresh coat of paint, and has settled in nicely.

Jim told us he brought an old family shelf clock to place on the fireplace mantle. The clock had not worked for several years, but when he set it on the mantle, he decided to give it a try. Lo and behold it started ticking! A good omen!

**WELCOME JIM!**

## **New Collections Management Policy being prepared**

Board member Barbara Moore has been hard at work in the preparation of a document (already at 40 pages and growing), that will give an overview of the museum and everything in it. This report will assess the overall environmental conditions in the Darling House from attic to basement, and offer recommendations for the care of each of the different types of collections (papers, textiles, furniture, pewter, etc.). For example, the sunlight entering the house contains not only visible light but ultraviolet and infrared as well. ALL these wavelengths of light cause long term detrimental effects. Furniture finish degrades, fabric fades, colors in pictures fade, and so on. What can we do to stop this process in both is short and long term? Barbara is doing a fantastic job answering these and many other questions that the Society MUST

### **Marginalia (or, fragments of thought)**

Soooo... How do you like our new format? I was a little nervous, because, well, you know I'm kind of on the conservative side, and this is the most high tech thing we've ever done. It's exciting though, because now I can scan photos, documents, or practically anything else into the newsletter. I hope to show you something new and different each issue. History melding with technology... and if our computer doesn't go up in a puff of smoke when the New Year arrives, we'll continue to churn out the news twice a year!

We managed to get the Darling House scraped, de-mildewed and painted since our last report. Thanks to Bob Brinton for orchestrating most of that endeavor. We are still working with the Regional Water Authority and the Town of Woodbridge on the preservation of the old cement kiln on Dillon Rd. and Litchfield Tpke. The northern half, which collapsed over a year ago, has been further "stabilized" for public safety reasons. The National Register application process has been started, and should be completed in the next several months. All I can say is that we will try to save at least a portion of it. We will have our annual tag sale thanks to Barbara Baldwin. She is coordinating the event and would be glad to hear from you if you have items to donate, or wish to have a space to sell "stuff". See the "events" box at the end of this newsletter. There are a few other VERY exciting prospects in our future, but it's really too soon to mention them, so I'll just leave you hanging...

## Calendar of Events

### Spring Meeting: Old Days Remembered

Place: Parish House,  
First Congregational Church

Time: Sunday April 25, 1999 2-4 PM

Oral History of farm and home life in the early days of this century, by those who remember.

Refreshments following.

### Dedication of Flagpole

Place: Backyard of the Darling House

Time: Sunday June 13, 1999 12:30 PM

We will officially dedicate Charles Correll's Eagle Scout Flagpole project to the memory of Sylvia Nelson Berrie. Short ceremony with a reception to follow. Rain or shine.

### Annual Fall Family Tag Sale (Sylvia's Attic)

Place: The Grounds of the Darling House

Time: October 2, 1999. 9 AM-3 PM (tentative)

Call Barbara Baldwin (393-0047) to sign up for a space at our annual fundraiser (still only \$10!), or if you have donations of good tag sale items. We can pick things up if needed. Food will be available on the day.

## What's up at South School?

### Plans for 1999

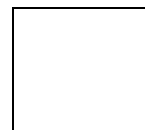
After a long winter's nap, we are getting ready to start this year's work at the schoolhouse. We are waiting on an industrial scissors jack to hoist the bell tower into place. We will do some fundraising brainstorming in the very near future, under the able leadership of our new fundraising chairperson, Aura Nagy.

Aura has volunteered to undertake this critical position, which until now, has been left to my inexperienced hands.

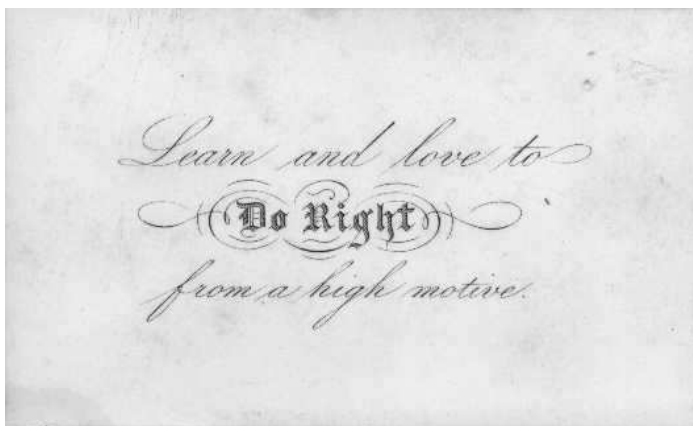
We have money enough for one segment of the restoration; we'd like to get the funds for the next phase in place before commencing work. The plan is to get the outside "skin" looking good by the end of the year.

The project has certainly undergone many modifications along the way, but the Committee is ever committed to seeing the project through to the end, no matter how long it takes!

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