

Historical Society of Easton

News, Articles & Calendar Events from the HSE

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HSE FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEBSITE

The Historical Society of Easton has joined many other organizations in using social media to reach its members. The HSE is now on Facebook.

If you are on Facebook, please “like” us and keep up to date on all of the events and HSE news. The Society’s Facebook page can be found at:

www.facebook.com/hseastonct

The Historical Society of Easton also has a new website:

historicalsocietyofeastonct.org

Thank you to Tom Spurr for putting this together and maintaining our website. Information on upcoming events can be found at both sites.

EASTON AND THE WAR OF 1812

Introduction Essay by Katie Vespe and Transcription of Original Documents by Frank Pagliaro

Also known as the “Second War of Independence,” the War of 1812 was a watershed moment in American history that is often overlooked today. This June marks the 200th anniversary of a war that lasted only two and a half years but dramatically shaped the destiny of our new nation.

Less than thirty years after the Treaty of Paris of 1783, which ended the American Revolution and established America as an independent country, the young nation found itself thrust into another conflict with Great Britain. The British had dominated the Americans on the high seas, impressing American sailors and threatening the freedom of the United States trade networks. Anti-British “War Hawks” convinced Congress that another war with Britain was the only way to ensure American independence. Younger members of Congress, including Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, favored war with Britain. These men, who were mostly Southerners or Westerners, had the ulterior motive of wanting to defeat the Native American’s top ally, the British, in order to clear Western land for American expansion.

The War of 1812 lasted from June 18, 1812 to February 18, 1815. By the middle of the war, chaos had ensued. A little more than a decade earlier, President Thomas Jefferson had attempted to lower the national debt by trimming the nation’s army and navy. This meant that when the War of 1812 broke out, the United States did not have much of a military force left to fight. A new, untrained American army was no match against the British

forces as they attacked Washington DC in 1814. The British forces added insult to injury as they burned the capital, forcing President Madison and his wife, Dolley, to flee with several of our nation’s treasures, including a portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stewart that hangs in the White House today. As the President and First Lady fled, British officers dined on a meal that had been prepared for the First Family and 40 of their guests.

Arguably one of the most famous battles of the War of 1812 took place at Fort McHenry outside of Baltimore, MD. As he sat detained on a British frigate, a young Francis Scott Key penned the famous lines of “The Star Spangled Banner” while watching the assault on the fort from afar. At Fort McHenry, a night’s bombardment proved unsuccessful for the British, and the American forces successfully defended Baltimore from attack.

By the middle of 1814, both the British and the Americans were looking for ways to extricate themselves from this costly and difficult war. Diplomats from both the United States and Britain met in Ghent, Belgium to discuss a peace settlement. Among the delegates from the United States was Henry Clay, one of the War Hawks that was instrumental in starting the war two years earlier. The war was officially ended on Christmas Eve, 1814, after a contentious bickering at the negotiations table. The Treaty of Ghent had ended the war, but word had not reached the United States until after Andrew Jackson’s

defeat of the British at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815.

The outcome of the War of 1812 was a reassertion of American power, showing the European nations that the United States was a strong nation that could not be controlled. Another important outcome of the war was a surge of nationalism that swept America into the “Era of Good Feeling.” This period was characterized by a new-found patriotism that had the ability to transverse the party divisions which had previously threatened the stability of the new nation.

The Historical Society of Easton houses a collection of letters and documents from the era of the War of 1812. Reading through the collection, it is clear that citizens of this region were divided on the decision to go to war with Britain and were greatly impacted by the War of 1812. As New England was heavily involved in trade and shipping in the early 19th century, one might suppose that they supported the war due to Britain’s pilfering of American ships. This was not the case, however, and many older New Englanders believed that war with Britain would be costly and disastrous. There were New Englanders that did support the war, albeit reluctantly in many cases. Among the documents in our collection are a petition of prominent citizens that states they hesitantly supported the War of 1812 and a letter to Eli Adams discussing the loss of goods on a cargo vessel and the fear of British attack. These documents shed light on Easton’s (then Weston’s) involvement in the War of 1812 and

See “War of 1812” on p. 2

"War of 1812" continued from p. 1

show the opinions of citizens as they endured the hardships that the war created.

Eli Adams, et al Declaration of Support of the War of 1812

From the papers of Lora Adams Clark

12"x15" paper, folded three times

In addition to the text transcribed below, there are some number notations, apparently monetary, which seem to bear no relation to the document.

Reads:

*Subscription paper
Circulated by Joseph Silliman
11 signatures*

Whereas great pains have been taken to impress the public mind with the idea that the War in which we are engaged with Great Britain, is extensively unpopular, and that it will not be supported by the people of New England, the undersigned think proper to declare, that, while they lament the necessity of a war, they are fixed in the determination to support it, till the attainment of an honorable peace.

*Eli Adams
Joseph Silliman
Anson Wheeler
Enoch Jennings
Burr Silliman
Joseph Bennet
Aaron Seeley
Sherwood Seeley
Justus Silliman
Stephen Sherwood
Munson Bennet*

Letter to Eli Adams, War of 1812

7 ½ " x 12" paper

Eli Adams Papers from Lora Adams Clark

Reads:

*Mr. Eli Adams
Merchant
Weston
Connecticut*

New York 31 August 1814

Mr. Eli Addams (sic)

Sir on the 9 Inst[ant] we Shiped (sic) you agreeable to you (sic) instructions in your letter of the 2nd Infantry by Capt E Baldwin the following goods

*Viz
1 Bbl Gin 32 Gs at 7/- \$28.00
4 [??] Spanish Indigo 24/ 12.00
Cartage _____ .19*

\$40.19

We have since heard that Capt Baldwin was taken & lost his Vessel & Cargo & Suppose you (sic) goods went the same way. We wrote you at that time Stating the Price of Groceries [??]

We are now quite alarmed here we fear the enemy are going to attack us. We are making preparations to defend ourselves which is about all the business there is doing.

A Skin Tea 10/6 to 12/ [??] 10 to 11/6 Sugar 18 to 22 [??] Molases (sic) 9 to 9/6 Good Rum 18/ to 20/ Molases (sic) d[it]jo 10/ to 10/6 Common d[it]jo 6/9 to 8/

*Yours [??]
[??] S. Brainerd*

RECENT EVENTS AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EASTON

In September, the Historical Society of Easton hosted several events to raise money for the Bradley-Hubbell Barn Restoration Campaign. On September 17th, a wine tasting, featuring wines from Wine Zone in Fairfield, was held at the Bradley-Hubbell House. Members of the Society as well as the community gathered and sampled wine from around the world. An art show, featuring art from members of the Easton Arts Council as well as other Easton community artists, also took place at that time.

On September 25th, HSE hosted its second annual Treasured Barns of Historic Easton Barn Tour. Members of the Society as well as the community were able to take part in tours of six architecturally and culturally significant barns throughout town. Thank you to Melanie and Eugene Marks, Michelle Fracasso, Jonathan Spitzer, Kristi and Stephen Tofts, Patty Popp, Gerald Snover, and Yigit Nilgun for volunteering their barns and homes for the tour.

LEARN TO WEAVE AND BE A DOCENT AT THE BRADLEY-HUBBELL HOUSE

Ms. Joanna Smith has graciously donated a 19th century loom to the Bradley-Hubbell House for use during our 2012 season. Ms. Smith will also be teaching docents at the Bradley-Hubbell House how to use the loom.

Any members of the Historical Society of Easton who are weavers or are interested in learning how to weave are encouraged to contact the HSE executive board for more information. We are also always looking for new docents for our open houses. **If interested, please contact the HSE board at (203) 261-2090.**

HSE ANNUAL MEETING AND ADAMS SCHOOLHOUSE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

**Sunday, December 4th, 1-3:30PM
Adams Schoolhouse
345 Westport Road**

The Historical Society of Easton's Holiday Open House will be held Sunday, December 4th, from 1:00 - 3:30pm in the one-roomed historic Adam's School House located at 345 Westport Road in Easton. An exhibit of early 20th century vintage holiday cards will be on display in the schoolhouse from the Society's collection. Children and their families are invited to make a holiday ornament and enjoy hot cider and sweet treats. A brief Annual Meeting will be held at 1:30 to discuss the 2011 financial report and future plans. Carolers from Joel Barlow High School will close our holiday celebration by singing from 3:00 until 3:30 setting the mood to celebrate with our community. The Society invites gatherers to caravan over to the Easton Public Library at 4:00 to join them as a community to celebrate the holidays with a tree lighting and refreshments. The Society is accepting non-perishable food donations for local food pantries. In the spirit of the season of helping others, assist us in filling the school with canned goods for the poor.

Please join us on Sunday, December 4th. We look forward to seeing you. For more information call Dean or Cathy Harvey at (203) 451-6015 or email at deaneyes@hotmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE HSE**FREE SATURDAY LECTURE
January 21st, 1-3 PM**

“War of 1812”
with Betty Oderwald at the
Easton Library Community
Room,
691 Morehouse Road

Our lecture program continues this winter with a lecture on the War of 1812 by Betty Oderwald, president of the Daughters of the Revolution.

Come learn about the importance and impact that the War of 1812 had on the nation and Connecticut from one of the preeminent scholars of the era.

This lecture coincides with the nation's celebration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812. **For more information, please contact the HSE Board at 203-581-0850 or hseastonct@gmail.com.**

**CIVIL WAR
ENCAMPMENT DAY
July 14th 2012**

The Historical Society of Easton will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War on July 14, 2012 with a Civil War Encampment Day at the Bradley-Hubbell House.

Soldiers and civilian reenactors from the Company F 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry will be on hand at our authentic Civil War encampment. Come learn about how soldiers and civilians lived during this critical era of American history.

Volunteers will also be needed to help run the encampment day. **If you are interested in helping, please contact the Historical Society at 203-581-0850 or hseastonct@gmail.com.**

**FREE THURSDAY LECTURE
March 1st, 7 PM**

“Connecticut's Role in the Civil War, 17th Infantry”
with Ed von Schmidt at the
Easton Library Community Room,
691 Morehouse Road

Join us for another exciting lecture in our 2012 lecture series. In addition to it being the bicentennial of the War of 1812, 2012 is the 2nd year of the sesquicentennial celebration of the Civil War. Mr. von Schmidt, former president of the Darien Historical Society, was instrumental in preserving local Fairfield county historical locations, including the United Way house, Noyes Mather House, and the Benjamin Weed House in Darien. Mr. von Schmidt is also the author of *Noroton Heights: A Neighborhood for Generations*.

Mr. von Schmidt will speak about the fascinating story of Fairfield County's Civil War regiment, the 17th Infantry. The 17th Connecticut fought in both the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

Come learn about the important contributions that Connecticut made to this critical era in American history. **For more information, please contact the HSE Board at 203-581-0850 or hseastonct@gmail.com.**

2012 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS

It is time to renew your membership in the Historical Society of Easton for 2012. Benefits of membership include:

- The quarterly HSE Newsletter
- Free admission to HSE Lecture series
- Reduced admission to Bradley-Hubbell open houses and tours
- Email Invitations and early notification of all HSE events

By renewing your membership, your contribution helps fund the Society's mission to preserve and promote the history of Easton. Your donations also help maintain the Bradley-Hubbell Homestead and the Adams Schoolhouse, providing educational and cultural activities for citizens of Easton and the surrounding areas.

Please consider renewing your membership today, using the form found below. Thank you!

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PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

____ Yes, please count me as a member of the Historical Society of Easton for 2012.

I enclose a check for \$_____ for dues in the following member category:

Family (Parents & children under 18), \$35____;
Adult, \$15____; Senior, \$10____; Sustaining, \$100____;
Patron, \$250____; Benefactor, \$500____; Other, \$____.

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please detach this document, make check out and mail to:

Address: _____

Historical Society of Easton
P.O. Box 121
Easton, CT 06612

Town: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

____ Yes, I would like to volunteer. Please call me!

HSSE 2011-2012

Our Board & Committees

Phone: (203) 261-2090

President

Lisa Burghardt

Vice President

David Katz

Treasurer

Joan Kirk

Secretary

Eleanor Burns

Events

Open

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Dean & Cathy Harvey

Bradley-Hubbell House

Harry Audley & Sonia Bodie

Membership

Dean & Cathy Harvey

Newsletter

Katie Vespe

Website

Tom Spurr

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO FORM EVENTS COMMITTEE

We're busy planning some fun events for our members and the community. We'd love a little help from our friends and members. Take a look and let us know if you can help in a small way. We know everyone is busy but small offers of help will help us in a large way.

Planned in 2012 is an Antique Show at the Bradley-Hubbell House, and a "Take a Look Day" of the many interesting items in our collection. A children's event is in the planning stages, perhaps a tea party or craft event if we have volunteer support. If you like these ideas and want to help, please call Lisa Burghardt at (203) 581-0850.

WE ARE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EASTON

Our mission is to research, interpret and preserve Easton's history.

To stimulate interest in Easton's history, we:

- Educate people to its changing life ways.
- Commemorate its founding stories.
- Sponsor programs and events that bring our community together.

To facilitate the study of Easton's cultural past, we:

- Chronicle its narratives and genealogies.
- Archive and exhibit its material culture.
- Manage historic properties.
- Conduct research to uncover its histories.
- Publish historical information.

Our members advocate an understanding of our town's architectural and historic links to the past.