



# CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## BRICK NOTES

### Letter from the President:

When you visit our CHS website ([www.clintonchistory.org](http://www.clintonchistory.org)) you will see our Mission Statement: *“The Clinton Historical Society seeks to acquire, preserve, and organize documents, photographs, and other artifacts that relate to Clinton’s history, and to inform the public about and promote interest in the history of Clinton through educational programs, exhibits, and collections.”*

In this issue of **Brick Notes** we recognize the individuals who have donated to CHS in a variety of ways over the past 3 years. It is these donations from our members and others that aid us in this mission. Thank you to the many people who have shown up at The George Flynn Library on Wednesday mornings with items in hand, in cardboard boxes, and even wagons! And, thanks also, to those who email us concerning items they wish to donate and make special arrangements to get them to us. Among the items recently donated were letters from the Civil War, a family bible, a Clinton National Bank sign, old postcards, Morgan Tower Yearbooks, old tools and toys, and many photos and newspaper articles of and about Clinton. As you read on, please note the Museum Room in the Andrews Memorial is open again every Thursday from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Anne and Jim Baker have done an outstanding job of cleaning and repairing the displays and setting up the **History of the Clinton Masons** exhibit.

Our Spring Membership drive went well and membership is now close to **200!** CHS is back in the swing of things! Our programs are starting up again in January. CHS will also have several new programs and events in 2022. Please look for our new CHS Annual Calendar in the Spring.

Thank you all for your continued support and I look forward to getting out and coming back from this pandemic. And thank you for helping to continue our CHS Mission!

Christy

### CHANGES to the CHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After countless years serving on the CHS Board in a variety of positions, most lately that of Auditor, Bion Shepard has retired from the Board. After having served as Clinton’s Treasurer, Bion began as CHS Assistant Treasurer in 2003 and later held the position of Treasurer as well as Membership Chair. Thank you, thank you, thank you, Bion for your dedicated work. We certainly will miss you. We are indebted to Dave Rainey who will now be our Auditor. Dave will continue to be responsible for all aspects of the Buell Tool Museum and CHS is so grateful for all the work he has done improving the building by replacing windows and exterior siding as well as continuing efforts to clean up and re-organize everything inside. We welcome Regina Robbins Wohlke to our board. With the departure of E. C. Schroeder, Regina will fill the position of CHS First Vice President. Thanks to Bion, to Dave, and welcome Regina!



### Farewell and Thank You to E. C. Schroeder

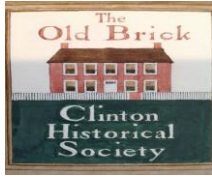
E. C. Schroeder has been an integral part of the CHS Board for many years. In 2004 he helped with the creation of a Library Board and served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. In 2005 he became 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, was on the Collections Committee in 2006, and served as President from 2008 – 2013. He continued to serve on the board in various positions including CHS Liaison to the Adam Stanton House. E.C. also presented numerous CHS programs, particularly several about the history of railroad service in CT, the CT shoreline, and in Clinton. After 30 years working at Yale University, E.C. ended his career there as director of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. His expertise has been invaluable to CHS. A farewell to E.C. was part of the Garden Party held in August. As a token of thanks, the CHS Board gave E.C. the gift of a book entitled “Lost Railway Journeys from Around the World” by Anthony Lambert. Thank you, E.C., for all of the countless hours you devoted to the Clinton Historical Society. You will be missed.

### Congratulations to the 2021 CHS Scholarship Recipients

Morgan Senior **Caitlyn Donadio** was awarded to CHS Ernest C. Burnham Scholarship. This scholarship is given to a student who has shown genuine appreciation for history and has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the field. The Victor Mays Art Scholarship, awarded to a student who; has shown exceptional talent as an artist and has demonstrated a commitment to pursue a career in the visual arts, was presented to Senior **Laura Roda-Sarmineto**.



*CHS President Christy Pontillo with Laura Roda-Sarmineto on the left and Caitlyn Donadio on the right*



The Clinton Historical Society would like to thank the following individuals for their financial donations; their gift of items for our archives, Museum Room and the Old Brick; or their gift of time on special projects: George Atwood and Nicki Davis; William Chittenden; Janet Velsmed; Diana and Frank Byrne; Warren Richards; Greg Lane; Armando Donofrio; Richard Otten; Peter Nuhn; Elizabeth Shea; Elizabeth and John Critchley; Choral Club of Clinton; Bill

Myers; UBS; George and Susan Schreck; Sondra Allen; Dominic Iaccarino; Peggy Lupone; David Townsend; Sarah Marcinek; Scott Lyman; Patricia Collins; Mario Lupone; Miriam Epstein; William Lewis; Alicia Sturgess; John and Henrietta Eliot; Delcie McGrath; Lydia Pardo McMinn; Robert Klein and Brenda Wiley; Kelsey Kindred; Susan Melchior; Charlie Clark; David Perrelli; Betsy Holcomb; Trudy Getek; Charles and Linda Stannard; Martha Byrnes; Robert Emack; Kay Swan; Morgan Husky Helpers; Charles Stannard; Janet Swanson; Richard Jones; Janet Swanson; Elaine Niles; Kaitlyn Rodrigues; Dianne Gustafson ;the Sondey Family; Amy Hull; The Norton Family; Michael and Mitchell Pair; Regina Wohlke; Keith Dauer; Jim and Jane Bartnett; Susan Morehouse Deobil; Peg Curran; Mary Jane Thompson; Kenneth Silverstein; Sandra Nuci; and Jephtha Lodge #95. CHS would also like to thank all who gave donations in memory of Dibirma Burnham, Lou Bougie, Trudy Stannard and Hal Dolan. Special thanks to Bob and Sue Deobil who have joined CHS as Lifetime Members and our other Lifetime Members: John Blakey, Mrs. Edgar Curtis; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hilborn and Marion and George Martinez. **THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL, FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES.**

### THE MUSEUM ROOM IS OPEN!!!!

At long last the CHS Museum Room, located in the Andrews Memorial Town Hall, has reopened. The room has been closed due to the pandemic. Anne Baker, the Museum Room curator, took advantage of those long months to clean up and revamp many of the room's exhibits. These changes and updates will be ongoing for a few months more. Regardless, CHS is happy to announce that this year's featured exhibit is about the History of the Masons in Clinton. The opening reception was on October 21<sup>st</sup> and the room was also open during the performances of the Connecticut Opera November 18th, 20th, and 21st. The Museum Room will be open most Thursdays from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM although it will be closed Thursday, November 25th for Thanksgiving. Come visit us during Christmas in Clinton on Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. CHS would welcome anyone interested in being a docent in the Museum Room on an occasional Thursday to please stop by on a Thursday or contact CHS. There is a short docent training session that will help you ease into volunteering. We look forward to your visit to this hidden gem, telling the story of the history of Clinton.

### NEWS ABOUT OUR BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Work has continued throughout the pandemic on the Old Brick, the Buell Tool Shed, the George Flynn Library, and our beautiful gardens thanks to Dave Rainey, Dave Bautz, John Quinn, and Christy Pontillo and some wonderful contractors. In the Old Brick a water-damaged ceiling was repaired, as was one of the panel doors of the dining room fireplace. Upcoming will be repairs to the Old Brick front door threshold as well as some gutter and siding repairs. The windows of the George Flynn Library have either been painted or will soon be replaced, and at the Buell Tool Museum there have been window, roof and siding repairs. As with any aging, historical building there is a never-ending list of repairs to be done – some immediately and some deferred – but there's always something. If you or if you know of someone that is extraordinarily handy and has some background in property maintenance, please consider volunteering to join this active committee in keeping CHS buildings and grounds safe, functional, and in good repair.

#### A Smoke House Demonstration and Tasting with Jim Barnett was held on Saturday July 24<sup>th</sup>.



In the spring of 2017, a stone smokehouse was moved to the 'Old Brick', stone by stone, by master craftsman Andrew Pighills. The smokehouse was moved from the property of St Alexis Orthodox Christian Church, just across the street from the Old Brick. The tasting included salmon, chicken, cheese, and vegetables, all smoked in the smokehouse by local chef Jim Barnett. Prior to the tasting Jim demonstrated some 18th century smoking techniques. Reservations were required and all who attended are looking forward to another such event in the future.

Photos by Megan Stine

#### OLD BRICK HAPPENINGS

On Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup> CHS welcomed a group of docents from the Florence Griswold Museum. They toured the Old Brick, learned about the Smokehouse, and the Buell Tool Museum, learned about the Flynn Archival Library, and enjoyed looking at photos of Clinton center throughout the years. They admired the model of the center of Clinton in 1915 built by Bert Godwin, complete with trolley and train tracks. Afterwards the group spent some quiet, restful time in our gardens before departing. Thanks to Laraine Scherban for coordinating this visit as well as being a docent in the Old Brick. She was joined by Faith Mangler. Carrie Allen explained the smokehouse, Dave Rainey opened the tool museum, Charlotte Neely and April Godwin Shuman hosted in the Flynn Library, Gail Webster was available in the gardens, and Christy Pontillo, who helped in countless ways.

### Wilcox Homestead, Clinton, Conn. 1884 by MBH, '84



The Clinton Historical Society recently acquired this rare painting by Mary Buell Hine (1840-1889). Many thanks go to David Perrelli who brokered the purchase. The painting is in good condition with no restoration or repairs and retains the original molded and gilt frame. As described on the invoice from Nathan Liverant and Son, LLC Antiques of Colchester CT "it is believed the house

in the painting is the "A. Wilcox" house, now located at 188 Cow Hill Road. A house identified as owned by A. Wilcox is featured on a map of Clinton illustrated in the County Atlas of Middlesex, Connecticut by F. W. Beers, published in 1874. Mary Ann Buell was the daughter of William Buell (1806-1885) and Delia Ann Buell (1809-1847). She was married in Clinton in 1862 to Dr. Elmore Hine (1836-1895). Both are buried in Indian River Cemetery. The house in the painting was likely owned by a descendant of William Wilcoxson (1601-1652) who first settled in Stratford, CT about 1639. His son, Joseph Wilcoxson (1635-1703)

moved from Stratford to the section of Killingworth that later formed Clinton and is listed as one of the Proprietors of Killingworth in 1663. The US Census of 1879 reports E.C. and Mary A. Hine, as living in Philadelphia. His occupation is noted as a physician. Both reported being born in Connecticut.

"Although clearly talented and demonstrating some training, the art and career of Mary Ann Bell Hine is shrouded in mystery. This unusual view of the Wilcox Homestead stands out for its documentation of an early Connecticut Homestead as well as evidence of Mary Ann Buell Hine's artistic excellence."

A print of the Charter Oak Tree was donated to CHS by the family of Edna Geneva Smith. Miss Smith was the first President of the Clinton Historical Society when it was created in 1938. Miss Smith graduated from The Morgan School in 1894 and went on to teach in Hartford before returning to Clinton in 1932. This print belonged to Miss Smith and it graced the walls of her home on Pearl Street.



Regina Robbins Wohlke is our newest board member. A lifelong Clintonian, Gina taught grades two, three, and four and special education students at the Lewin G. Joel School for 40 years until her retirement in 2012. She served on many committees and supervised more than twenty student teachers and was an adjunct professor at Sacred Heart University. Gina is now a paraprofessional at Lyme/Old Lyme High School in the Life Skills and Post graduate program, adapting curriculum, and working with students as a job coach. She recently donated a painting of the Clinton Manor Inn as well as a wonderful scrap book about the Inn that was run by three generations of the Robbins family.

Ella Robbins, Regina's mother, opened the Clinton Manor Inn in 1931. The beautiful home sat on 13 acres where Ocean State Job Lot is now located. The inn was known for its delicious food, its great barroom, and as a meeting space for many of Clinton's organizations. It was a favorite place for those who came to Clinton to work at or attend the Clinton Summer Playhouse, with notable guests like Shelly Winters and John Barrymore. "Ma" Robbins was a generous citizen, willing to help families in need of food and other expenses, and even fed and housed a group of hobos who stopped by. The inn closed in 1973 and the property was sold. One lasting piece from the Inn is its gazebo which is now located on Dan Vece Jr. Way, formerly known as Library Lane. Efforts are being made to get the gazebo refurbished. Anyone interested in helping with this endeavor please contact CHS.

### CHS Board of Directors

**President:** Christy Pontillo  
**First Vice President:** Regina Wohlke  
**Treasurer:** Jack Scherban  
**Recording Secretary:** Gail Webster  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Mary Jane Morelli  
**Auditor:** David Rainey  
**Buildings and Grounds:** Dave Bautz  
**Librarian:** Charlotte Neely  
**Museum Curator:** Anne Baker  
**Old Brick Curator:** Laraine Scherban

**Publicity/Website:** Megan Stine  
**Facebook Page:** David Perrelli  
**Newsletter:** April Shuman  
**Garden:** Dianne Gustafson and John Quinn  
**Hospitality:** Shora Rainey and Sue Schreck  
**Membership:** Marion Martinez  
**Buell Tool Museum:** David Rainey  
**Collections Curator:** David Perrelli  
**Programs:** Carrie Allen  
**Gifts and Grants:** Carrie Allen and David Perrelli



**Clinton Historical Society**

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We regret that CHS, out of an abundance of caution, will not be hosting its traditional Holiday Luncheons and Dinners again this year. Thank you to Marion Martinez for chairing this event and to Faithe Mangler and Jackie Blomberg for their time doing the advance planning and preparations. We look forward to the return of these very popular luncheons and dinners in 2022.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Please consider becoming a volunteer at CHS. So many opportunities are available either on a short- or longer-term basis.

Care to be a docent at the Old Brick?

Contact Laraine Scherban at [lscherban@hotmail.com](mailto:lscherban@hotmail.com). Would you like to fine tune your gardening skills?

Contact Dianne Gustafson at [gustafsondianne@gmail.com](mailto:gustafsondianne@gmail.com).

Do you have an occasional Thursday late afternoon available to docent at the Museum Room? Contact Anne Baker at [anneb303@comcast.net](mailto:anneb303@comcast.net). Are carpentry and home repairs in your skill set? Contact Dave Bautz at [dmbautz@comcast.net](mailto:dmbautz@comcast.net).

Love history and research? Contact Charlotte Neely at [charneely@gmail.com](mailto:charneely@gmail.com).

Would you be willing to help with our bake sale, plant sale or help at any of our events? Contact Christy Pontillo at [info@clintoncthistory.org](mailto:info@clintoncthistory.org).

CHS looks forward to hearing from you!

**CHS Calendar of Events  
FALL/WINTER 2021/2022**

**Exhibit in Andrews  
Memorial Town Hall  
Museum Room:**

The History of the Masons in Clinton  
Open Thursdays 5:00-7:00 p.m.

**Annual Ghost Walks**  
CANCELLED

**Christmas in Clinton**  
Sun. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Annual Holiday Luncheons**  
CANCELLED

**Annual Holiday Dinners**  
CANCELLED

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