



## BRICK NOTES

SPRING 2023

### ***Letter from the President:***

Welcome to Spring! Old Brick gardens are coming to life as we reflect on our CHS Winter events. Christmas in Clinton was a huge success as our campus was busy from 12:30 P.M. until after close at 4:00 P.M. The Old Brick Buell Tool Museum and the George Flynn Library were all open along with the Old Brick. Our outdoor fire pit was adding warmth to those who gathered around to relax. From my vantage point in the Library, I observed the constant flow of guests moving around our grounds and from building to building.

In October, Preservation CT presented “Restoration 101” at the Henry Carter Hull Library. This was very well attended. February saw an evening of storytelling at the Henry Carter Hull Library. David LeVasseur, past President of the Killingworth Historical Society, provided an interesting overview of Jared Eliot. Bob Bruch, Clinton Town Historian, who is also President of the Adam Stanton House and Museum, followed with information about Adam Stanton’s family history.

We can always use volunteers and with Spring here the gardens are our focus area. We are also looking for folks willing to assist with our Museum Room, the Old Brick, and our buildings and grounds. Please contact us via email at [newsletter@clintoncthistory.org](mailto:newsletter@clintoncthistory.org) or through our website, [www.clintoncthistory.org](http://www.clintoncthistory.org).

David Perrelli has been hard at work searching for grant opportunities. With our CT Humanities Council grant of \$7,600.00 CHS was able to upgrade its computers, printers, and software. We will now have a dedicated computer for visitors to use when visiting our archives. We also upgraded to high speed internet in the George Flynn Library. All our computers are now connected to our printers to make us more efficient. A huge thank you to Bill Stine for setting these up and doing the conversions from the old to the new! No small task, greatly appreciated.

Our membership has been consistent and expanding during the past several years. It not only continues to grow in numbers but we have also seen an increase in donations as well. Thank you to all who have contributed both monetarily and by volunteering. Our Museum Room in the Andrews Memorial Town Hall is open every Thursday night from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. Our current exhibit is from the Masons who have the lodge on the second floor of the town hall. Come take a look as we will be changing over to a new exhibit this summer.

Below you will see an article about Megan Stine. She will be leaving our Board of Directors after many years and will be greatly missed. Thank you for everything, Megan.

Christy

### **Celebrating 17 Years of Service to CHS: Megan Stine**



The CHS Board wishes to thank Megan Stine for her dedication and devotion to all things CHS. Megan has made the difficult decision to step down from serving on our board in order to focus on her numerous other interests and spend more time with her family. The Stine family moved to Clinton in 2006, and to up residence in the house previously owned by Megan’s Uncle George. George Flynn will be remembered for his generosity, creating a fund to bring free classical music concerts to Clinton,

known as the George Flynn Classical Concert Series. Additionally, he left a generous bequest to the Clinton Historical Society, giving CHS the opportunity to renovate the Old Brick’s garage, which is now the CHS George Flynn Library. Shortly after moving to Clinton Megan began volunteer work in town and found an immediate “home” with CHS. Her first role was to write and edit our newsletter, a role she was ready made for as she is an accomplished writer of more than 150 children’s books, both fiction and non-fiction. From that time on Megan has served on the CHS Board in multiple capacities. Megan has served as chair of Publicity, has kept our website and Facebook page up to date, has been 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and then served as CHS President from 2013-2016. She was also the coordinator of our email blasts and, most recently, the board’s Zoom coordinator. Megan has worked on our By-Laws, our Docent guide, was a liaison with the Adam Stanton House, and helped in securing numerous grants. During the Covid shut down, Megan and her husband Bill created a virtual tour of the Old Brick, the George Flynn Library, the Buell Tool Museum, and our gardens for people to enjoy, which remain an integral part of our website. The CHS Nominating Committee has found that the board will need to recruit, at the very least four people, to fill each area Megan has been working on tirelessly. How very fortunate and grateful we are to have had such a devoted advocate for Clinton, Clinton’s history, and the Clinton Historical Society. Megan, you’re leaving quite a legacy. Thank you for everything.

## Christmas Thank You Notes from CHS



Thank you to everyone who made Christmas 2022 such a memorable one for CHS. The Old Brick was beautifully adorned with festive holiday decorations, trees, and wreaths. Special thank you's to the Schrempp Christmas Tree Farm for supplying this year's Christmas tree, and to Dacia Marszalik, Laraine Scherban, and Mary Pat Walton for supplying the greenery needed for all the decorative mantel and table pieces created by the Arbor Garden Club. Thanks to Laraine Scherban for setting all the candles in the windows and tending to their timers, and to Paul Neri, who has for many years taken the time to hang the wreaths on the exterior of the Old Brick and the George Flynn Library.

We were thrilled to welcome over 200 visitors to the Old Brick, the Buell Tool Museum, and the George Flynn Library during Christmas in Clinton. A generous array of cookies was served for our guests to enjoy and more than 30 attendees left with our brochure that includes information about becoming a member of CHS. Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who provided such gracious hospitality, information, and assistance.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for those who made the return to our traditional Christmas Luncheons and Dinners possible. All four seatings were sold out quickly thanks in large part to the efforts of Megan Stine in helping us move to online reservations. Thank you to those who attended and to all those who put in countless hours of planning, preparation, and presentation. A huge thank you goes to Marion Martinez who coordinated the events, Faithe Mangler who so ably assisted, and to Jackie Bloomberg who lovingly prepared the sumptuous meals. Thanks go to Nina Viscardi, John Quinn, Jeane Jarusik, Kathy Blake, JoAnn Goldberg, Jackie and Gene Bloomberg, and Nancy Moran for volunteering their time and energy in providing our guests with your gracious hospitality.



*Photo by Marion Martinez*

To acknowledge the many years during which Mary Bovich organized and produced our Holiday Luncheons and Dinners, Christy Pontillo, CHS President, and Dianne Gustafson, presented her with a poinsettia and praised her for her many contributions. Mary's devoted countless hours, days, weeks, and years, creating wonderful meals, providing a welcoming atmosphere, and seeing that each and every aspect of each event was attended to. Thank you, Mary!!



*Photo by Marion Martinez*

### **MORE TO BE THANKFUL FOR!!!!**

The Clinton Historical Society would like to thank the following individuals for their gifts of items to our archives: David Perrelli, Nancy Vece Shuss, Joanne and John McCarty, Lorie Eadie, John Quinn, Scott Lyman, Brenda Wiley, Janis and Lawrence Malone, Joe Matteis, W.B. McKeown, Peg Curran, the Danbury CT Museum Room, Peggy Adler, Ann Colson, Robert and Roxanne Eurto, and Barbara Beaudin. Thank you, one and all, adding to our archives. CHS now has over 28,500 items in its archives as well as all the historic pieces that are in our Museum Room, the Old Brick, and in storage. We welcome your donations of anything that is Clinton related – documents, newspaper articles, photographs, programs, and the like. The George Flynn Library is open Wednesday mornings from 9:00 AM to noon. You are welcome to stop by with your donations or contact us by email [info@clintonhistory.org](mailto:info@clintonhistory.org) to make other arrangements.

### **George Flynn Library Update: New Computers**

Thanks to the grant from the CT Humanities Council CHS was able to purchase and install new computers for the George Flynn Library. The old computers are being repurposed for our treasurer's use and for membership rolls. An additional one will be available for guests to use to research our archives. Many thanks go to Christy Pontillo and Charlotte Neely, CHS Librarian, for figuring out what would be the best use of the grant funds, and a multitude of thanks to Bill Stine for getting everything in working order. With the added increase in internet speed and the new equipment our library volunteers are spending more time working and less time fixing!!

### **Docents for the Old Brick and the Museum Room**

Docents are needed to help staff the CHS Museum Room at the Andrews Memorial Town Hall, which is open every Thursday from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM. The Old Brick is open for special events like Christmas in Clinton and CT Open House Day. Training for either is available at your convenience. You can volunteer once a year, once a month, or whatever amount of time you might be willing to offer. Contact Anne Baker at [anneb303@comcast.net](mailto:anneb303@comcast.net) concerning the museum room and Laraine Scherban at [lscherban@hotmail.com](mailto:lscherban@hotmail.com) for information about the Old Brick. We look forward to hearing from you.

## 1962: Venus Fly Trap Springs Clinton Firm to Fame

A 1962 New Haven Register article begins with a question: How many times have you broken in to a private home, walked out with a Venus Fly Trap and raced for New York and coast to coast television fame? That's exactly what happened when Warren Richards, Jr., plant manager of Clinton Nursery Products, Inc., got a telephone call from a manager of the Jack Paar television program asking if he had a Venus Fly Trap to show on television. The Venus Fly Trap was a bulb that Clinton Nurseries had developed a few years previously. "The advertising on the package containing two bulbs for 79 cents assured the purchaser that it is easy to grow.,. Exotically beautiful...and eats hamburger." "The most popular years for the plant was in 1961 when Clinton Nursery Products, Inc. sold more than one million of the unusual bulb. A bulb features thousands of tiny hairs which causes the jaws of the plant to close when an insect comes in contact." Richards recalled that, despite a major marketing campaign, the plant did not sell well. That all changed when the plant made its television appearance. One afternoon Warren received a call from a representative from the Jack Paar Show, which, at that time, was NBC's very successful late-night show in New York City. The story goes that when Warren asked when did the Paar Show want the plant, they answered "tonight." Richards himself didn't have a plant but remembered that Seward Hull Jr., a Clinton realty agent, mentioned that he owned a fly trap. Richards, finding no one home at the Hull house, climbed through a window, stole the plant, and jumped on a train at 4 o'clock for New York. He got to the studio by 6 and returned home. "I then called Seward to tell him to watch his plant on TV."



Warren Richards Jr., plant manager of Clinton Nursery Products Inc., poses with Venus Fly Traps, similar to millions he has sold across the nation. AT

### CHS and the Lafayette Trail



In partnership with The Lafayette Trail, Inc., CHS recently oversaw the installation of an historical marker commemorating the bicentenary of the farewell tour of America made by the illustrious Revolutionary War veteran, the Marquis de Lafayette. The Lafayette Trail, Inc. is a nonprofit organization with the mission to document, map, and mark General Lafayette's 1824/1825 travels to highlight Lafayette's contributions to "American independence and national coherence in preparation for the 2024-2025 tour bicentennial celebrations." The trail's principal goal is to "bring together history, cartography, and computer science in an education program whose principal goal is to raise

awareness about Lafayette and the ideals he stood for throughout his life." Having joined the Revolutionary War effort almost fifty years earlier as a teenager, Lafayette was now in his late sixties and the war's only surviving Major General. Lafayette's tour of America began at the request of President James Monroe, a fellow Revolutionary War veteran, who was eager to commemorate the United States' fiftieth anniversary and strengthen diplomatic goodwill between America and France. The Lafayette Trail organization worked in conjunction with local historical societies and libraries in developing a map and timeline of Lafayette's Connecticut Trail, documenting where Lafayette went, who he met, where he stayed, and even what he ate! The towns along his route in Connecticut include Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford, New Haven, East Haven, Branford, Guilford, Madison, Clinton, Westbrook, Old Saybrook, Old Lyme, East Lyme, New London, Norwich, Griswold, Plainfield, Stafford Springs, Tolland, Vernon, Hartford, Cromwell, and Middletown. Here at CHS Laraine Scherban and Christy Pontillo worked tirelessly with the group in researching our archives for any references to Lafayette passing through Clinton on his way to Boston. Clinton's folklore tells that Lafayette stopped in Clinton at the Chittenden Tavern that was located on the corner of Commerce Street and Main Street. There was also a tavern located across the street from the town green at Liberty Street and visits of George Washington and Lafayette are both associated with this tavern. Lafayette might have indeed visited one or both locations however no documentation could be found that he spent the night at either establishment. There is a written record that Lafayette did spend a night in Old Saybrook. Clinton can still hold bragging rights that one can walk down Main Street in Clinton, the same route that Lafayette and other historic notables have traveled in years gone by. For more information go to [thelafayettetrail.org](http://thelafayettetrail.org) or [thelafayettecttrail.org](http://thelafayettecttrail.org). Thank you to [thelafayettetrail.org](http://thelafayettetrail.org) for the above information.

### Volunteering Opportunities: It's Gardening Time!

The CHS Garden Committee welcomes all who would like to join them on Tuesday mornings from 9:00 AM to noon weekly as they tend to Old Brick's beautiful gardens. Come learn about gardening from our exceptionally experienced gardeners as they work in our gardens full of perennials, shrubs, herbs, and trees. If Tuesdays are not possible, other times can be arranged. Please contact Diane Gustafson at [gustafsondianne@gmail.com](mailto:gustafsondianne@gmail.com) or John Quinn at [jquinne72@gmail.com](mailto:jquinne72@gmail.com) for more information Our gardens are open to the public and we encourage you to take some time to come and enjoy the peacefulness of our grounds.

### CHS Board of Directors

**President:** Christy Pontillo  
**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:** Dave Rainey  
**Collections Curator:** Dave Perrelli  
**Programs:** Carrie Allen  
**Gifts and Grants:** Carrie Allen and Dave Perrelli



## Clinton Historical Society

P.O. Box 86  
Clinton CT 06413

Phone: 860-669-2148

E-mail: [info@clintoncthistory.org](mailto:info@clintoncthistory.org)

Or

[newsletter@clintonhistory.org](mailto:newsletter@clintonhistory.org)

Website: [www.clintoncthistory.org](http://www.clintoncthistory.org)

Find us on Facebook

Clinton Historical Society

[www.facebook.com/CHSOldBrick](http://www.facebook.com/CHSOldBrick)

### Thank You for Your Support

We wish to thank you for your continued support of CHS through your membership, pledges or any donations. Another way you might consider would be to mention the Clinton Historical Society in your will. You can also donate stock any securities that you've held for more than a year and gain a tax benefit. You'll be able to deduct the current fair market value of the stock, even if you paid less for it, and you won't pay capital gains taxes. If you are age 70 1/2 or older and have an IRA, consider making a tax-free donation directly to CHS from your retirement account. A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) will count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Such a donation should not affect your taxable income as long as the money is transferred directly from the IRA to the charity. We encourage you to speak to your tax professional prior to any gift. If you would like more information about donating from your IRA or donating securities, please contact our investment adviser, Sam Pappas, at Mystic Asset Management. You may call him at 401-453-5558 or email him at [sam@100shares.com](mailto:sam@100shares.com).

### CHS Annual Plant Sale

This year's annual plant sale will be held on Saturday June 17, 2023 from 9:00 AM to noon. As you are tending to your own gardens, please consider digging up some of your plants to set some aside to donation to our sale. Please place your donations into pots and deliver them to the back porch of the Old Brick any time prior to the sale. Be sure to label your plants so we know what we are selling. This is one of our best fundraisers of the year, thanks to the generosity of your plant donations and purchases. Sales will be by cash or check only. Thank you to Dianne Gustafson and John Quinn, who chair the Garden Committee and oversee this event.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Blacksmith Event

Saturday, July 22, 2023

#### Smoke House Event

Saturday August 26, 2023

Details will be announced soon!

### CHS Calendar of Events 2023

#### CHS Annual Meeting/Pot Luck Supper

Friday, May 5, 2023

Green Room Andrews Memorial

6:00 – 8:00 PM

#### Memorial Day Parade

#### CHS Bake Sale at the Old Brick

Monday, May 29, 2023 10:00 AM

#### Connecticut Open House Day

Saturday, June 10, 2023

Noon – 4:00 PM

#### CHS Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, June 17, 2023

9:00 AM – noon

#### CHS Annual Garden Party

Saturday, September 10, 2023

5:00-7:00 PM

### SAVE THE DATE!!

#### Christmas in Clinton

Sun. Dec. 3, 2023 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

#### Annual Holiday Luncheons

Wed. Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and Thurs. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

#### Annual Holiday Dinners

Fri. Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> and Sat. Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**CHS 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.**