



*Ruth Callander House
Museum
492 Main Street, Portland*

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER - *Martha Lutecki*

Happy Winter! I certainly hope you all enjoyed your holiday season and that many of you were able to attend our Annual Holiday Exhibit which again featured toys, dolls, collectibles, trains, and other memorabilia from holidays past. Our thanks to our Exhibit Committee for all of their hard work! Thanks also to Fran DiNatale for building and donating a beautiful Victorian dollhouse which was raffled off with a winner being selected by Shannon Dolan on December 23rd. Hundreds of people from the community took a chance on the dollhouse, which was on display at the Portland Fair and later at the Museum.

Exhibits: Speaking of exhibits, we urge you to stop by this spring to see our new exhibit featuring information about local farms, past and present. Sue Anderson suggested a display on farming and has done much research and community outreach to facilitate the display and has worked with the Exhibits Committee to coordinate this unique exhibit which opened on February 3rd with over 50 people attending.

Election of Officers/Board Members: I'd like to welcome our new officers and board members: Vice-President, Sue Anderson; and new Directors, Jim Rau and Claire Frisbie, and extend our deepest thanks to departing Board members Mary Ann Dolan and Bernie Dillon.



Cutting hay at the Payne family farms - one of many photos in the Portland Farms Exhibit at the Ruth Callander House Museum.

Upcoming Activities: With spring around the corner, we are already beginning to prepare for the Annual Town-wide Tag and Bake Sale which will be held on Saturday, May 10th. If you would like to help out, please contact Eleanor Crowther.

Brownstone Quorum Festival – If you have any suggestions for our participation in the Festival in September, please let me know.

We have a number of interesting programs scheduled for this spring and encourage you to join us!

***12th ANNUAL TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE
SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2008***

12th ANNUAL TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE DAY

MAY 10, 2008 - 8:30 AM TO 2:30 PM



Our Checklist - How can YOU help?

*delineates areas *most* in need of volunteers

- 1.* **Solicit Sponsor Ads for Map** - Joan Guilmette, coordinator
- 2.* **Publicity - signups, donations of goods, etc.**
3. **Supply sign-up sheets to several locations**
4. **Print and send Tag Sale Hints to participants** - Sharon Bergman and Darren Anderson
5. **Organize and print map** - Frisbies and Bob McDougall
6. **Construct/repair Signs and Sign poles** - Pat Crowther
- 7.* **Call members for donations to Bake Sale (about 15 people)**
8. **Obtain hot dogs, beverages, etc. for food sale** - Woltmanns
9. **Receive donated items at Callander House, Saturday April 21, 28, and May 5, 9-11 AM.**
- 10.* **Deliver and pick up Tag Sale sign poles (about 20 people)**
- 11.* **Set up Society Tag Sale at Callander House garage and Grange**
- 12.* **On the big day - 15 to 20 tag sale workers for the Callander House garage and Hemlock Grange; 10 cooks, helpers and bake sale workers for the Grange**
13. **Transfer left-over treasures to garage from Grange at 2:30 pm (3 or 4 people)**

Last year, this annual fundraiser made about \$5,800 for the Society's museum and programs.

**To volunteer call: Eleanor Crowther 342-2907
Chris Sullivan 342-4105
Ruth Freeburg 342-3636**

**Please join us at a Tag Sale meeting: Tuesday, March 18 4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 8 7:30 pm**

12th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale
Sponsored by The Portland Historical Society, Inc.
Benefiting the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

PLAN A TAG SALE

Saturday, May 10th
8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

RAIN OR SHINE

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

- The Historical Society will help to promote your Tag Sale.
- Your contributions will help fund Historical Society Museum.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE:

- ☛ Location Maps with sale item types
- ☛ Advertising ☛ Tag Sale Hints
- ☛ House Marker Sign

Option	How it works:	Rec'd by Society by April 12th	Rec'd by Society Apr. 13 - 26 <u>deadline</u>
1.	Have a sale at your own home or neighborhood for your benefit.	\$20.	\$25.
or 2.	Tailgate your tag sale at Hemlock Grange parking area, jct. Rte. 17 & Sage Hollow Rd	\$20.	\$25.
or 3.	Donate items to benefit the Historical Society tag sales at Hemlock Grange and Callander House. (No clothing, textbooks, or unwieldy items, please.)	Items may be delivered to the Society Saturdays, April 19, 26, & May 3 at Callander House garage, 492 Main St. from 9-11 AM. Pickup also available. Call 342-3636.	

ALSO BAKE & TAG SALES with coffee, soda & hot dogs at Hemlock Grange, 17 Sage Hollow Road on Tag Sale Day.



Clip and mail to Portland Historical Society Tag Sale, P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT, 06480

Make checks payable to: Portland Historical Society

Contact Information: Name: _____ Sale Address: _____ Phone: _____ Will you have Tag Sale if it rains? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Options (Please check all that apply)	BY April 12	April 13 - 26
	<input type="checkbox"/> Home sale	\$20.	\$25.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tailgate at Grange	\$20.	\$25.
	Items (circle, list): toys/tools/misc./ _____		

MEMBERSHIP DUES . . .

We've listed below paid-up members as of mid-February for the current year. If you're **not** listed below, check the mailing label on this Newsletter. If "life" appears, your life membership has been paid. If "2008" (or later) appears, you have paid your dues for this year. Otherwise, the last year for which we have received dues is shown.

The Society needs you as a contributing member. Not only financially, but also with your help and knowledge of Portland's past. Dues: (Individual \$10; family \$20; lifetime \$250) should be mailed to : Portland Historical Society, Inc., P.O.Box 98, Portland, CT, 06480. Questions? Call me, Bill Frisbie, 860-342-0303.

<i>Alan & Joan Anderson</i>	<i>Jim and Judi Elder</i>	<i>Violet D. Keenan</i>	<i>Judy Pogmore</i>
<i>Chad Anderson</i>	<i>Frances & Deborah Ellsworth</i>	<i>Jean Kelsey</i>	<i>William & Violet Pozzetti</i>
<i>Darren D. Anderson</i>	<i>Lloyd Erskine</i>	<i>Richard & Terry Kelsey</i>	<i>*Jim & Susan Rau</i>
<i>Marion Anderson</i>	<i>*Mark J. Finkelstein</i>	<i>Marie Keser</i>	<i>*Lucile Chapman Richards</i>
<i>Susanne A. Anderson</i>	<i>*Mary H. Flood</i>	<i>Mrs. Roselies Kutz</i>	<i>*Hazel Robinson</i>
<i>*Patricia S. Aresco</i>	<i>*Marshall V. Fogelmark</i>	<i>Karen Labbadia</i>	<i>Rebecca G. Robinson</i>
<i>Karen Baker</i>	<i>*Myron and Jane Foster</i>	<i>Thomas F. & Susan R. Ladny</i>	<i>Ellen S. Roman</i>
<i>Jacquelyn Barrett</i>	<i>Ruth S. Freeburg</i>	<i>Judy Lane</i>	<i>Howard & Sari Rosenbaum</i>
<i>Ginny Battista</i>	<i>Bill & Phyllis Frisbie</i>	<i>Bill and Evelyn Larson</i>	<i>Edward A. Rousseau</i>
<i>Julia & Richard Blauvelt</i>	<i>Claire L. Frisbie</i>	<i>Harold & Sue Larson</i>	<i>*James Sarbaugh</i>
<i>*Sandy Bourret</i>	<i>Colby Gauthier</i>	<i>George and Elaine Law</i>	<i>William D. Schneck</i>
<i>*Colleen M. Brede</i>	<i>Gloria G. Gdovin</i>	<i>John LeShane</i>	<i>Frances E. Schoell</i>
<i>Grace E. Broberg</i>	<i>Myrna G. Geiges</i>	<i>John J. Levay</i>	<i>*John H. Schufer</i>
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<i>Jean & Bill Bronson</i>	<i>Richard & Lynn Gildersleeve</i>	<i>Marty Lineen</i>	<i>*Ann Gildersleeve Sloan</i>
<i>Marion Basiel & Gerald Bryan</i>	<i>*Richard O. Gildersleeve</i>	<i>Marjorie H. Lojeski</i>	<i>Ellen Squier</i>
<i>*Dr./ Mrs. Gerald Burke</i>	<i>Alfred & Barbara Gildersleeve</i>	<i>Joanne A. Luppi</i>	<i>Robert C. Stancliff</i>
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<i>Charles & Margaret Coe</i>	<i>Allen & Ruth Grover</i>	<i>*Heather McDougall</i>	<i>Hildur Sullivan</i>
<i>John F. Conklin</i>	<i>*Mrs. David T. Guernsey</i>	<i>*Robert W. McDougall</i>	<i>John/Eileen Sullivan</i>
<i>Peter & Jeanette Connolly</i>	<i>Randy & Joan Guilmette</i>	<i>Ruth J. McGowan</i>	<i>Jane E. Sweet</i>
<i>Yvonne Cozzi</i>	<i>Romanie Gussenhoven</i>	<i>Joan & Bill McGrath</i>	<i>*Donald A. Taylor</i>
<i>*Lucille C. Cramer</i>	<i>*Elsie M. Hale</i>	<i>Anna Natale McMahon</i>	<i>Peggy Tierney</i>
<i>*Dr/Mrs D.S.F. Crowther</i>	<i>George & Judy Hale</i>	<i>Marilyn H. Meckensturm</i>	<i>Bruce & Karen Tyler</i>
<i>*Janis M. Cummer</i>	<i>Robert A. Hale</i>	<i>Beverly W. Merk</i>	<i>Barbara B. Valk</i>
<i>Denis Cunningham</i>	<i>Larry & Drusilla Harder</i>	<i>*William R. Muller</i>	<i>*Richard Van Steenbergen</i>
<i>*Linda Cunningham</i>	<i>Richard & Jean Harmon</i>	<i>Caroline D. Murray</i>	<i>Arthur & Phyllis Waldman</i>
<i>*Betty Curley</i>	<i>Judy & John Harper</i>	<i>Jane Nash</i>	<i>Bethia Robinson Washburn</i>
<i>Jan & Dan Davis</i>	<i>Mary (Mrs. Edmund) Hayn</i>	<i>*Beverly C. Newberg</i>	<i>Kenneth Weeks</i>
<i>Carol M. DeBerry</i>	<i>Bruce & Doris Heerdt</i>	<i>*Walter A. Olsen</i>	<i>Norma L. Werdelin</i>
<i>*Norma DeGraff</i>	<i>*Terrance J. Hettrick</i>	<i>Walter W. & Ruth Olson</i>	<i>*Kenneth & Jean Whatmore</i>
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<i>Susan Sloan Dugan</i>	<i>George & Carolyn Johnson</i>	<i>John & Marlene Peterson</i>	<i>John Zabiski</i>
<i>Judith Gildersleeve duPont</i>	<i>Robert & Christiane Johnson</i>	<i>Wm & Paula Petzold</i>	<i>Nancy C. Zimmer</i>
<i>Robert S. Edwards</i>	<i>*Anne Kavanaugh</i>	<i>Sal J Pitruzzello</i>	

* Indicates Life Membership

HISTORY . . .

From the newsletter **The Jarvis Biax** of The Charles L. Jarvis Co., [*Indian Hill Ave, possibly the present Airex building*] Gildersleeve, Connecticut, **April 1936** Vol. III No. 5. Donated by Don Goodrich
[Notes provided by Doris Sherrow-Heidenis, from the 1933 City Directory]

THANK GOODNESS, THE FLOOD IS OVER

RUDI WETZEL'S LETTER TO TOM DREIER

[*Rudolph Wezel (sic), toolmaker Charles L Jarvis Co.; house 22 Bartlett St., Gildersleeve*]
[*Tom Dreier', unknown*]

We shut down our plant on Thursday noon, March 19th as the water of the Connecticut River, right back of the shop, was coming up rapidly. A man was left on guard to notify us at our homes as soon as the water was within one foot of the factory floor.

At 1 o'clock that night the power failed and our watchman called us. We got some of our men together and started to move all of our stock about 30" from the floor, also all electric motors which were on the floor.

The water at that time had already entered our boiler room and had flooded the furnace as well as the hardening furnaces.

We kept careful check on the rise of the water and at about 4 o'clock Friday morning it did not rise any more but dropped about 1". This made us believe that the peak had been reached, but as we found out later this was only due to the fact that some dikes broke up the river and this for a time absorbed the water.

We went to F. C. Barker's home for bacon, eggs and coffee which, by the way, had to be fried in the furnace down stairs since the power, as mentioned before, was shut off and no electric stoves were working. [*Frank C. Barker, secretary Charles L. Jarvis Co., house 571 Main Street, Gildersleeve*]

We had about an hour or so of sleep and when we returned to the factory we found that the water was again rising. By 1 o'clock Friday afternoon it was just beginning to seep onto the floors of the shop and office.



The road to our factory

Continuous guard was kept and we finally had to move about 15,000 ft. of flexible shafting out of a small stock room building which is built on higher ground than the factory floor.

At the peak of the flood the floor was covered with 22 3/4" of water. This was Saturday morning about 8 o'clock. From then until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the level stayed the same.

After that the water slowly started to recede and by Monday morning the floor was again clear of water and we immediately began to clean up and disinfect.

With many of our men helping, the factory and office floors as well as the walls and all the equipment which had been under water were thoroughly washed down and disinfected with Lysol and chloride of lime.

[article continued next page]

[Thank Goodness, The Flood is Over continued]

By Tuesday night this job was entirely completed and the motors were back in place. Wednesday morning the boiler room was also free of water and also this part of our factory was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. By noon we had the permit of the Health Officer to resume operations and by 2:30 we had electric power and at 3:00 that same afternoon began actual work again and first shipments were made that evening.

During all of this time the office work was kept up at Miss Ericson's home, which fortunately was equipped with a furnace which did not require any electrical power, also a telephone which was still operating. *[Clara E V Ericson, asst-secretary-asst-treasurer Charles L. Jarvis Co., residence 33 Prospect Street]*

The Middletown-Portland Bridge was closed to traffic on Thursday (the 19th) so for a few days we had very irregular mail service. It was only possible to leave Portland via a small field road; and to reach Middletown, which is normally only about two miles from here, we had to make a 65-mile trip down the river and up on the other side. Both roads to Hartford were impassable.



The quarry dike breaks. Note floating tank cars.

For a time quite some fear was felt for the bridge between Middletown and Portland since many houses, barns and drift wood swept against it, but this 40 year old structure certainly stood up well and on this Thursday it was again opened for traffic.

At present about 100 CCC boys and WPA Workers have began the tremendous task of cleaning private homes and disinfecting them in order that the inhabitants can move back into them as soon as possible.



A flood victim

We hardly believe that people outside of the flood area realize what a tremendous loss this flood has been to the people of our valley and that it will take many of the sufferers years to recuperate. The spirit of cooperation and helpfulness has been tremendously aroused.

Due to the fact that our factory is of wooden construction, we had our building maintenance man examine our roof. He has been with the company for about 30 years and hails from the land of the Vikings. He was accompanied by one of the younger men and as they were examining up there, they found something of minor importance and the younger man wanted to come down and get advice from M. N. Jarvis. "John" resented this with the remark, "Never mind going down asking, up here I am the boss himself."

We certainly had our anxious moments during the Great Flood but now we are giving thanks that we came through with no greater loss. Our men were good sports and worked eagerly to get motors and machines to places of safety. The result is we were able to clean up the place in a hurry and then start production with a minimum of delay.

[Photos are from the original article with original captions.]

NOTES . . .

Farm Exhibit Opens

More than 50 guests attended the February Callender House Museum Exhibit Opening "Where Did All the Farms Go?" The originator, Sue Anderson, not only suggested the subject but contacted all the present and former farmers to obtain histories and artifacts. Through the histories, pictures and artifacts, the exhibit creates remembrances of life on the farm. In this opening exhibit we have offered glimpses of Portland's dairies, tobacco farms, orchards and general farms. Our first exhibit featured 10 farms - Arvid Anderson's Blague Dairy, Francis DeBari Farm, Goodrich Family Farm, Gotta's Farm, Charles Johnson's Grandview Dairy, Alan Anderson Feed Store, Hale Boys Tobacco Farm, Payne Family Farm, Strickland Egg Farm and Wheeler (Larson Family) Farm. For the March exhibit, more material on the original farms and 4 additional farms - Earl Prout Dairy, George Johnson Tobacco Farm, Chiabrero Family Tobacco Farm, Shepard Tobacco Farms - will be displayed. As the year progresses, Sue hopes to add more farms and farm support businesses to the exhibit as the materials become available. If you have information, materials, or suggestions about Portland farming, call Sue at 342-0433. (All pictures and written material will be copied and promptly returned.)



Sue Anderson at the Museum's Farm Exhibit

Civilian Conservation Corps

Marty Bodskoch will speak at the September Society Meeting about the 1930 era Civilian Conservation Corps. Bodskoch has written several books on this subject. The CCC was designed to offer organized training for young men in several fields. Many Portland residents remember the CCC camp on Great Hill Road. Bodskoch would be interested in any information or see any pictures of life in the local camp. He can be contacted at 860-267-2442 in Colchester.

Portland Photos

Jerry Dougherty, a former long-term Standard Knapp employee and avid photographer has taken many photos of Portland including houses, business and public buildings and other scenery. These pictures can be seen on his website (<http://public.fotki.com/gcdougherty/>) or by using the link Bob McDougall has added to the Society website.

In addition to Portland, Dougherty has taken representative pictures of **every** city and town in Connecticut. Now he has moved on to Southern Massachusetts!

Cromwell Holds a Ball

The Cromwell Historical Society has invited members of our Society to **The Ball of the Rebellion**. Juleps & Viragoes, the living history department of the Cromwell Historical Society at the 1853 Stevens-Frisbie House, presents this premier event of the 1863 social season. It will take place Saturday, April 5, 2008 7:30 to 11:00 pm in the Community Room of the Cromwell Town Hall. Music will be provided by Spare Parts. "While period attire is encouraged and admired, formal attire of the twenty-first century will be equally at home." For further details, contact 860-635-0501 or email julepsnviragoes@aol.com.

"Letters to Harry" Book

Among the generous gifts the late **Prudence and T.J. Palmer** gave to **The Middlesex Land Trust**, the highlight of which was the 70 acre Palmer-Taylor Preserve, they also included their manuscript for the book *Letters to Harry*. Research of the letters, found in their attic, occupied many years for T.J. and Prudence. The manuscript has been carefully edited by Nancy D'Oench and Gay Smith in collaboration with the publisher, Northeastern Graphic.

Henry Osborn Taylor (1856-1941) was an author, philosopher, and one of the world's foremost authorities on the history of civilization. His seminal work, The Medieval Mind, was published in two volumes in 1911 and reached its fifth edition in 1938. Born in New York City, Taylor spent the summers of his youth and adulthood in Portland, Connecticut, on the Connecticut River.

Taylor's great niece, Prudence Taylor Palmer, and T.J. Palmer transcribed the letters about his youthful experiences in the silver mining area in Nevada. The book paints a vivid picture of life in the 1870's. *Letters to Harry* is available for a donation of \$25. To order call 342-0433.

CALENDAR

All programs are held at the Portland Library,
Mary Flood Room, at 7:30 pm., unless otherwise indicated.

March 2 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

March 25 - "The President did What" Program
by Bob Berthelson *at Portland Senior Center*

April 6 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

April 22 - "Architecture and Landscape Photography"
Program by John and Cassidy Olson, photographers

May 4 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

May 27 - "Notable Trees in Connecticut" Program
by Glen Dryer of Connecticut College

June 1 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

June 24 - Potluck Picnic

July 6 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

August 3 - Portland Farms Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

September 7 - Portland Farms Exhibit
- Museum open 2-4 pm

**September 30 - "Civilian Conservation Corps in 1930's
Portland" Program** by Marty Podskoch

CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

- 2008 Calendar - Queen Annes of Portland\$8
- Portland Recipes and Reflections.....\$8
- Letters to Harry
by Prudence Taylor and TJ Palmer....\$25
- Coloring & Activity Book of Portland History.....\$5
- Images of Portland by Bob McDougall.....\$20
- St. Clements
by Prudence Taylor and TJ Palmer.....\$15
- Previous Year Calendars..... \$5
- Antique Pictures of Portland Magnets
\$2 each, 3/\$5, set of 20/\$30
- Portland Scenes Notepad (50 pgs., 5 scenes)..\$5
- Portland Scenes Tea Towel.....\$6
- Meshomasic Forest Video by John LeShane....\$5

**Please include \$2 shipping
for each \$10 of order**

All monies donations toward Society projects
Call 342-0433 to order or mail to: *Portland Historical
Society, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480*

NEWSLETTER - *Phyllis, Bill and Claire Frisbie, 3-3-08*

Newsletter!

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2008

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PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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