

# Lyme Public Hall Newsletter



The Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc.

Vol.6, No. 1

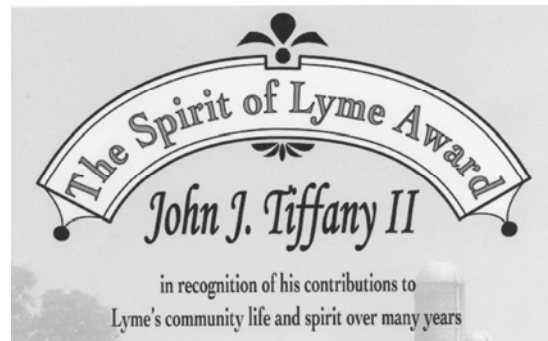
Spring 2007

## Jack Tiffany is the “Spirit of Lyme”

Anyone who has driven into Lyme appreciates the beauty of Tiffany Farms. The open view of cornfields and pastures is a delight in any season, and the “ladies in waiting” enjoying a meal from their roadside deli have entertained young and old for many years. In the shadow of the silos lives the hardworking farmer who has cultivated this land for most of his life, while contributing much to enhance the quality of the lives in the community.

On November 12th, 2006, “in recognition of his contributions to Lyme’s community life and spirit over many years,” John J. (Jack) Tiffany II received the Public Hall’s first “Spirit of Lyme Award,” created in his honor. The afternoon began with Jack’s talk on the history of Tiffany Farms, during which he regaled the standing-room-only crowd with his tales of the farm and growing up in Lyme. Jack’s daughter Hannah Schillawski concluded the program by talking about the innovative technologies they’ve adopted to help them succeed as a dairy farm in the 21st century.

Lyme Public Hall President Wendolyn Hill surprised Jack with the award at the end of the program. In keeping with the Association’s mission to preserve and promote the heritage and community life of Lyme, the Lyme Public Hall Association thanked and honored Jack for his lifelong commitment and contributions to Lyme. Some of those contributions include his service as state legislator for many years, selectman, volunteer member of the Boards of Education and Finance, and his generous donation of land for the Safety Complex.



Jack Tiffany receives the Spirit of Lyme Award from Board President Wendolyn Hill as his daughter Hannah Schillawski looks on.



Lauren Schillawski holds a cake decorated with the Tiffany Farms bottle cap logo during a reception to honor her grandfather, Jack Tiffany.

## A Celebration of Lyme's Town Historian Hiram Maxim

### *Old Movies of Lyme, a Reception, and Book-Signing*

Sunday, May 20th, 2 PM

After a long planning phase, changes are beginning to take place in front of the Public Hall. New signboards were designed and installed last summer, replacing the familiar sandwich board that served for many years to announce upcoming events. Landscape architect Sarah McCracken generously donated her time and talent to design new beds using a variety of plants and shrubs. Included in the plan is a set of granite steps to make it easier to get to the upper level. Using funds contributed by the Lyme Garden Club, this exciting project gets underway this spring.



*New granite steps were installed in March.*



New signboards were installed last summer by Parker Lord, Bill Denow and Jim Beers.

Join us as we celebrate the debut of Hiram Maxim's new book, ***Lyme Heritage News, 1995-2000***. It is a long anticipated compilation of the popular newsletters that Hiram has provided several times a year since taking on the mantle of Town Historian in 1995. Hiram will be on hand to personally sign your copy. The event will begin with a showing of old movies of Lyme, filmed by Hiram's grandfather, an amateur filmmaker. Hiram will introduce and narrate the films "Hamburg and its People" (1930) and "The Restoration of the 1769 Farmhouse and Property at 52 Blood Street" (1924). Immediately following, there will be a reception to honor Hiram for his dedication as Town Historian and his steadfast friendship of the Lyme Public Hall.

Filling the position of Lyme Town Historian is a labor of love, as there is no budget or compensation from the government. When Hiram volunteered to do the job, he chose several ways in which to highlight the town's history. One way was to create the "Lyme Heritage News," newsletters full of interesting historical facts, that all residents receive. Another of his endeavors has been to research the history of the oldest houses in Lyme. Many of these homes are now identified by plaques that denote the name of the builder or original owner and the year of construction. Hiram also began a campaign to restore old cemeteries and has enhanced Lyme's award winning annual town reports with historical themes and photographs.

We hope you can be a part of our celebration. The event is free and open to the public.



*Board members Wendy Hill, Diana Lord and Janis Livingston form a happy kitchen crew.*



*Visitors enjoy the displays at last year's 4th of July Exhibit, "Farm Life: Facts and Fancy."*

#### **Who to contact:**

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Membership in the Lyme Public Hall Association is open to anyone with an interest in the Lyme community. The Association receives no town funding and is supported through tax deductible membership fees, donations, and fund raisers. We invite you to join. The membership year runs from May 1-April 30. Select the support level that works best for you. Make checks payable to Lyme Public Hall Association, Inc., and remit to P.O. Box 1056, Lyme, CT 06371

Supporting — \$15    Subscribing — \$25    Contributing — \$50    Sustaining — \$100

Additional donations of cash, appreciated securities, or future bequests are also welcome. Thank you for your continued support.

To join our e-mail list for notice of upcoming Lyme Public Hall events, send a note to: [lymepublichall@comcast.net](mailto:lymepublichall@comcast.net)

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## FARM LIFE: FACTS AND FANCY

By Carolyn Bacdayan

A record number of visitors enjoyed the “Farm Life: Facts and Fancy” exhibit at the Lyme Public Hall over the 2006 Independence Day weekend. Visitors were charmed by the artistic and perhaps idyllic representations of Lyme farm life in paintings, color photographs, and embroidered and hooked rugs together with other artifacts such as butter churns, cheese and butter making implements, impressive brass tipped ox horns and velvet-boxed bronze medals for prize sheep and Devon oxen. Ice cream cones served to the exhibit’s Sunday visitors evoked memories of the days of ice cream socials at the Hall and the former prominence of dairy farms on the scene in Lyme.



*Will Marvin Farm (Many Springs Farm), Hamburg Road, Lyme. Oil by Margaret Cooper, 1930s. Courtesy of Lyme Public Library. Condron photo.*

But the hard facts of making a living or even subsisting on a farm in Lyme were also featured in the exhibit. Letters written in the 1820s and ‘30s from Sterling City folks who had migrated to bountiful Ohio recalled the really hard life in Lyme they left behind. Entries in the 1895 account journal written by John Jewett Tiffany—grandfather of present day Jack Tiffany—revealed the daily race to wrest “enough” from the forest, farm animals, crops and home crafts to purchase or barter for other necessities. Necessities for farmers included blacksmith and farrier services to keep oxen and horses shod and wagon wheels in repair; footwear and flour from the store; visits to old Doctor Josiah Ely; and yes, even occasional ice cream socials at the Lyme Public Hall. A shoemaker’s records and housewives’ butter and egg accounts told the same story of hard work and tight budgets.

Formal photographic portraits on display showed proud families—both immigrant and old line—at the homestead or in period Victorian farm house parlors. These were industrious and resourceful people. Newspaper clippings reported how they established and led community organizations and gave dedicated public service—to Lyme’s three churches, the Public Hall, the Grange, the town government and the Connecticut General Assembly.

Art work, artifacts and photographs which were generously loaned for the exhibit greatly enhanced the materials drawn from the Lyme Public Hall’s local history archives. Special thanks go to Tedi Cavicke, Jane DeWolf, Trudy Emerson, David Brubaker, Angie Falstrom, Lou Condron, Rosie Fox, Sara Denow, Wendy Hill, Polly Murray, Jack Tiffany, Judy Ulrich, Andrea Wing and to Carolyn Bacdayan, curator of the exhibit.



### Farm Drawing Contest

Some talented young Lyme artists entered our farm drawing contest and their pictures were a great addition to our 4th of July exhibit. Each winner received a set of note cards made with his or her winning art work. The grand prize was awarded to first-grader Laura Wayland’s drawing of a busy barnyard.



*Jess Kegley,  
First Prize, Preschool*



*Meredith Kegley,  
First Prize, 2nd Grade*



*Trevor Kegley,  
First Prize, 5th Grade*



*Laura Wayland,  
Grand Prize*

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## Local History Archives

It has been a very good year for the Archives. The collections continue to grow with fifty-nine new accessions in 2006. There were sixteen researchers who visited the Archives as well as interested individuals from two towns to see the facility and ask questions about starting their own archives. We are extremely happy to have acquired a new computer and scanner with the capacity to accommodate the growing database of photographs, postcards, documents, maps, etc. about Lyme.

The Archives depend totally on volunteers doing a wide variety of tasks like sorting newly donated materials, filing processed materials into special folders and boxes, entering titles and subjects into the database, composing summaries, and photocopying. Mary Catherwood, Doad Jewett and Betsy Buch have put in many hours the past year. Others have helped with special projects: Lou Condron provided photography services; David Brubaker has written file summaries; Morgan Ely is working on preserving the audio/video collection; Suzie Brown is indexing subjects in a news collection. Eleanor O'Connell, Angie Falstrom, Diana Lord and Doad Jewett clip current news for "tomorrow's history." Sara Denow provides expert hands-on support for our computer and programming needs. Everyone's interest and support for preserving our local history is greatly appreciated.

## A Few Recent Accessions

"Old Hamburg Bridge," drawing (right) by Jesse Beebe, 1930s, artist and scenic hooked rug creator, from the perspective of her home. *Condron photo*



The first Treasurer's Book of the North Lyme Cemetery Assn, 1854, with details about the new cemetery (behind the Hamburg church), its laborers, construction materials, fence and stone wall construction, plot layouts and first burial.

Deed for "Clothier's Works," an early industry in the Sterling City area, 1832, Peter Lord to Marshfield Parker.

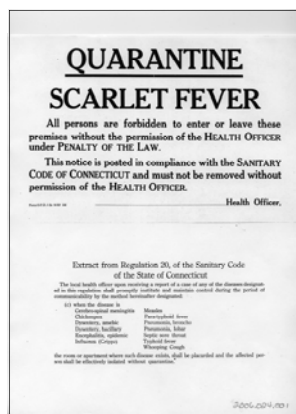
1900 parchment diploma for Musa Warner, teacher at Sterling City School, from the Connecticut Normal (Teacher) Training School, New Britain. (New teachers in Connecticut were not required to have diplomas until 1927!)

Late 19th Century photographs of the James Ely Harding family and farm, Sterling Hill Road.

1930s quarantine sign for scarlet fever, precursor to crippling rheumatic heart disease, especially for children, before the advent of antibiotics in the 1940s. Dr. Julian Ely was the new young doctor and health officer at the time.



James Ely and Ida LaPlace Harding home, Sterling Hill Road, torn down c. 1935. Harding is on wagon; children were Ora, Ada and Ida; Ray, Jay, and Lee.



1930s quarantine sign for scarlet fever found in a Sterling City home.



Musa Warner, teacher, with Sterling City School pupils, 1895.

## ***“Milling Around in Lyme”***

The next exhibit at the Lyme Public Hall will take a look at some of the mills that were scattered around the Lyme countryside right up into the 20th century. They used water power and then steam to get the work done, to make the products people wanted, and to bring in cash.

Where were they, when did they operate and what kinds were they? Learn about shoddy, fulling, knitting, felting, sawing, crushing, grinding, pumping, pressing (apples of course), and more kinds of mills.

The millers were farmers, entrepreneurs and some real characters! Local history items such as maps, photographs, construction documents, diagrams, product examples and artifacts from our Archives and from guest exhibitors will provide a picture of the contribution of these busy millers to the life and industrial history of Lyme.

If you have any photographs, graphics, examples of milled material, or a model of a mill that you would be willing to loan for the exhibit, we'd enjoy hearing from you.

The exhibit will be free and open to the public. It will be held at the Lyme Public Hall, 249 Hamburg Road, Lyme during the 2007 Independence Day week. For further information, please call Carolyn Bacdayan, 434-9292.



*This is the Archives' only photo of how things looked at cidering time, from Lyme native Carl Reynolds' cider mill in Waterford, early 20th Century.*

## **Lyme Public Hall Archives**

### ***Mission:***

To collect, document, preserve and make accessible the historical heritage of Lyme.

Before disposing of materials with a connection to Lyme, please think of the Archives.

The Archives are open by appointment. For information about using the Archives, donating materials, volunteering on an occasional or regular basis, or making a financial contribution, please contact Carolyn Bacdayan, Archivist (860) 434-9292.

### ***Can You Help?***

Transcribe taped interviews (we have a transcriber machine)

Convert 18th and 19th century documents into typed copy

Scan photos from our database

Create articles, stories, poems, or exhibits using archival materials

Donate toward purchase of wire shelving units on wheels; an archival quality color printer; multi-function laser printer/copier/scanner with an 11" x 14" flat bed; a tape recorder



### ***Having a special event?***

- a reception, exhibit, program, party, or even a tag sale? The Lyme Public Hall can accommodate a variety of activities and may be just the place to host your occasion.

Rent all or part of the building. The assembly room seats 140 for lectures, or, with the tables set up, 65 for dinner. For smaller groups, there is the meeting room.

Renting the basement for a tag sale - with 2 garage doors facing the street - is a real bargain.

For fees and availability, please call Puchita Ely at 434-5595.

## Farm Facts

### Cows and More Cows!

There were almost two dozen small dairy farms in Lyme in the 1930s.

By the 1920s, TB in cows was brought under control; pasteurization made milk safe from typhoid and TB germs; and electricity had come to Lyme allowing milk refrigeration. New London and New Haven dairies began to come right to the farms to pick up the milk. In addition, the federal government began income support for dairy farmers because of the instability in milk pricing caused by the Depression.

As a result, many Lyme farms were able to expand from general farming into dairying in the 1930s to take advantage of the new income and market opportunities. The more prominent ones were:

**Lord Hill** - Richard Ely, Will and Charlie Peck (Early Dawn Farm); **Hamburg** - Leon Tiffany, Will Marvin; **Bill Hill** - Ray Harding (Ashlawn); **Joshuatown** - Eugene Czikowsky Jr. Co., Manville Farm; **North Lyme** - Ed Bill (Raymond Farm); **Grassy Hill** - Newton Lee; **Beaver Brook Road** - Warren Stark, Stanley Machuba, Joe and Ed Firgelewski, Stanley Sankow Sr., Arthur Sweet; **North Plain** - Lawrence Mazer, John Mazer.

By the 1960s and 1970s, however, dairying became less profitable and most of the dairymen turned to other kinds of production, retired or sold out.



Some bottle cap designs from farms in Lyme. LPH Archives

## Selden Island Quarries Walk

Saturday, April 21,

9 a.m.-12 p.m.

More than 100 years ago, Selden Island was the site of a quarry employing up to 600 men. The dense granite rock was extracted from the ledges with the help of steam drills and chiseled by hand into stones to pave the streets of New York City. Guided by Historian Warner Lord and Naturalist Bill Yule, we will hike and explore the remains of the quarrying operation on the island. We will visit a recently rediscovered foundation on the top of a hill far above the river. This is a moderately strenuous two-hour walk. Sturdy shoes and steady feet are a must.

We will depart from Essex Harbor to cruise the CT River on the Riverquest, a 54-foot excursion boat, to get to the island. Coffee, tea and water are included. Bring lunch or a snack to enjoy on the boat ride home. Don't miss this rare treat to travel back in time!

The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Reservations and prepayment are required. To reserve your spot on this trip, please call Angie Falstrom at 434-3194 or email her at [jfalstrom@comcast.net](mailto:jfalstrom@comcast.net). Space is limited.

## Dairy Farming in the 21st Century at Tiffany Farms

Hannah and Dave Schillawski are looking towards the future of Tiffany Farms with their registered Holstein breeding and merchandising program. "We figure it doesn't cost any more to raise a genetically superior animal, so that is an important way we can supplement the milk income," said Hannah. Using artificial insemination, they can selectively breed animals based on their conformation traits. They also do some embryo transfer work, in which 7-day old embryos from superior cows are implanted in recipient cows. The cows are routinely evaluated by a representative from the Holstein Association and the Vermont Dairy Herd Improvement Association, adding to their value by establishing their pedigrees and potential.

"We hope to continue the trend of supplementing the milk sales through diversification such as registered cattle, compost, and beef sales," said Hannah. "It's important to us to keep agriculture strong in Lyme, and we hope to do what it takes to stay viable."

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## Save these Dates

For more info or to assist with these or future events, call Wendy Hill, 434-2961.

Earth Day Weekend, April 21, 22

### *Lyme Spring Clean-Sweep*

Town-wide roadside clean-up. Free trash bags available at H.L. Reynold's (Jane's) store and Hadlyme Country Store. On Monday, Town of Lyme picks up bags left on side of road.

Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

### *River Cruise to Selden Island*

A morning cruise from Essex Town Dock to Selden Island onboard the *RiverQuest* excursion boat. Warner Lord will lead an expedition to the site of the old quarry. Wear comfortable shoes! \$30 members / \$35 non-members. Call Angie Falstrom at 434-3194 to reserve a space on this trip. More details, opposite.

Sunday, May 20, 2 p.m.

### *A Celebration of Town Historian Hiram Maxim*

Join us as we show our appreciation and celebrate the debut of Hiram's new book on Lyme history. The afternoon will include old movies of Lyme, a reception, and book-signing. See details, page 2.

Friday, June 8, through Sunday, June 10

### *Art Sale to benefit Tiffany Farms*

In conjunction with the Lyme Art Association, the Lyme Public Hall will host an art show of Tiffany Farm paintings done by artists from all over the state. See details, page 8.

Thursday, June 14, 6 p.m.

### *Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner* *Nick Bellantoni, Local Archaeology*

See details below.

4th of July Weekend, dates and time to be announced

### *"Milling Around in Lyme"*

An exhibit of Lyme's mill history. See details on page 5.

Saturday, August 4

### *Tag & Bake Sale*

A bargain hunter's delight. Set aside your donations for this fund raiser: furniture, tools, small appliances, house wares, linens, toys, decorative and gift items.

Thursday, September 6, 7 p.m.

### *Hurricane Readiness and Hurricane Rita* *With Lee Watkins and David Roberge*

Presentation at the Public Hall. See details below.

Sunday, October, date and time to be announced

### *Sterling City Walking Tour*

The historical and charming Sterling City area of Lyme will be the focus of a guided walk by Lyme Public Hall Archivist Carolyn Bacdayan.

Friday, November 16, 5 p.m.

### *Chowder Supper*

An old favorite is back: our traditional chowder supper featuring clam chowder, corn chowder, breads, cheese and dessert. Call Janis Livingston at 434-8566 for information.

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## **Hurricane Readiness and Hurricane Rita** *With Lee Watkins and David Roberge*

*Thursday, September 6, 7 p.m.*

Hurricane Rita made landfall in Western Louisiana on September 24, 2005, just a month after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. Cameron Parish was particularly hard hit. Lee Watkins and David Roberge, Emergency Management Directors of Lyme and Old Lyme (respectively), spear-headed a committee to adopt Cameron Parish and provide relief. Just in time for Christmas 2005, they delivered a used fire truck given by the Lyme Fire Company and a shipment of donated toys and other gifts to the heavily damaged community.

Mr. Watkins and Mr. Roberge will show slides of the devastation wrought by this powerful hurricane. They will also discuss the potential impact a strong hurricane will have if it hits Connecticut, and what people can do to prepare and protect themselves if it happens.

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## **Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner** *Nick Bellantoni: Local Archaeology*

*Thursday, June 14, 6 p.m.*

A community potluck dinner will begin at 6 p.m., followed by a brief meeting and a presentation by Nick Bellantoni, Connecticut State Archaeologist.

Mr. Bellantoni has been involved in several archaeological explorations in the Lyme area. He will talk about the sites he's investigated, including the recent exhumation of the body of Venture Smith, a former African slave who bought his freedom and lived a prosperous life on the property he acquired nearby in East Haddam.

Bring a main course, salad or dessert to share for the potluck dinner. Beverages, plates and utensils will be provided. The event is free and open to the public.

## ***Art Benefit for Tiffany Farms***

***A Plein Air Paint-Out and Sale of Paintings, June 2—10***

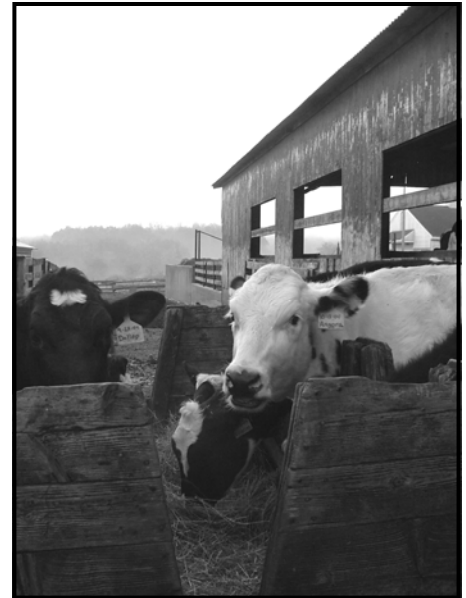
**Sponsored by the Lyme Art Association  
& The Lyme Public Hall**

For over a century, artists have freely set up their easels on Rt. 156 in Lyme to paint the cows, fields and barns of Tiffany Farms. Now area artists are gathering once more with palettes in hand to paint the familiar scenes, this time to raise money for the farm that has provided so much inspiration.

Painting days are Saturday, June 2, through Wednesday, June 6. All artists are welcome to participate on any or all days, for no charge. Registration will be at 168 Hamburg Road, where water, Ashlawn coffee, and toilet facilities will be available.

Finished artwork must be delivered to the Lyme Public Hall by Thursday, June 7. In addition to “wet paint” pieces, we will gratefully accept donations of other artwork. Each artist may choose the percentage of the sale price to be donated to the farm.

The art show begins with a reception on Friday night, June 8, at the Lyme Public Hall and continues through Sunday, June 10. Volunteers will be needed for the paint-out days and the sale days, so please let us know if you can help in any way. For more details, contact Angie Falstrom at 434-3194, or [jfalstrom@comcast.net](mailto:jfalstrom@comcast.net).



*Tiffany cows Dollop, Pilgrim,  
and Angora*



**THE LYME PUBLIC HALL**  
*Historical Organization and Archives*  
249 Hamburg Road  
P.O. Box 1056  
Lyme, CT 06371

*The Lyme Public Hall Association  
is dedicated to the appreciation  
of Lyme's history, culture, and  
community through the  
preservation and use of the  
historic hall, its archives, and  
historical programs.*

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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