



Ellington Historical Society

P.O. Box 73

Ellington, Conn. 06029

February 2018 Newsletter

The Ellington Historical Society will meet on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hall Memorial Library at 93 Main Street.



After a short business meeting, Master Gardener and herbalist Carole Barber will present "The Role of Herbs in an Early American Household."

Refreshments will be provided by Denise Archibald and Joe Ouellette.

News from the Curator-Nancy Long

Current Projects

The seasonal closing of the museum allows some time to develop and research historical exhibits. Through the end of February, the display case at Hall Memorial Library features the collection of the Charles Price diaries, scrapbook and photos. We like to rotate our exhibits through the library to reach a larger audience.

In March, the library display will change and will feature items from our collection of American Indian artifacts and tools. This collection originally was housed at the library in the years before we had our museum at 70 Main Street. Information about the donor and a collection inventory have remained missing until now. A recent study of scrapbooks kept by Nellie McKnight revealed an article dated January 16, 1943 from a local newspaper describing the donation of "Indian relics" to the library by Burton Allen, a former Ellington resident. Information about Mr. Allen has been gathered from census records and will be featured with some of the artifacts.

Research is being developed for a display to further study the Edward Hall School and the people who were part of the school. We have recently accepted a collection of family letters and school catalogs from a descendent of Dr. Eli Warner (1843-1884). This material will be used to tell the story of Eli's career and family as well as life-long connection to the Hall family.

News from the President-Tim Fahy

A *Journal Inquirer* photographer came to the Nellie McKnight Museum on December 2nd to take photographs to accompany a story about the 50th anniversary of the Ellington Historical Society.

The story caught the eye of U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, who wrote this letter of congratulations and wrote "Awesome!" on it.



African-American History Month

February is African-American History Month. Ellington is believed to have been a link on the underground railroad, which helped slaves escape to the northern states and Canada. One of the hiding places was reported to be the cellar in a former inn at the corner of Jobs Hill and Meadow Brook Roads. The route continued onto what is now Egypt Road heading to the next stop at the Somers Inn, according to a chapter in the 1987 book *Ellington, Chronicles of Change* by Dorothy Cohen.

School visits: In January, Nancy Long and I visited the 3rd grade classes at the Windermere and Crystal Lake schools. We brought items from the Nellie McKnight Museum that helped illustrate what life was like in the 19th century before the advent of electricity. Of special interest to the children was “wash day”, ice harvesting, and the music played on our Edison phonograph machine.

News from the Archivist-Lynn Fahy



The story of John Hall and his son Edward Hall and their Ellington schools was in our January newsletter. Another son, Francis Hall, pictured here with his sister-in-law Mrs. Edward Hall, figured prominently in the history of Ellington and in trade between Japan and the U.S. in the 19th century. He was born in Ellington in 1822. After completing his course of study at his father’s Ellington School in 1838, he established a bookstore in Elmira, New York. Later, he became America’s leading business pioneer in Japan. He returned to the United States and Elmira in 1866.

He gave the town the land and the money to build the Hall Memorial Library in honor of his father and brother. The library was dedicated in 1903. A copy of the book *Japan through American eyes : the journal of Francis Hall, Kanagawa and Yokohama, 1859-1866* / edited and annotated by F.G. Notehelfer is in the library’s collection.

The three stained glass windows above the main staircase in the original part of the library are portraits of John, Edward, and Francis Hall.

April 2018 meeting, Thursday, April 26th at the Hall Memorial Library, 7:00 p.m.

Richard N. Symonds, Jr. of Tolland will discuss the latest book in his Lost Mill Sites in Tolland County series, *Location of Water-Powered Mill Sites, Ellington, Connecticut*. The mills played an important part in local history, but the history and many of the locations have been lost. Symonds visited many of the sites in Ellington to document them and record their locations. His book includes maps and photographs. Copies of the book will be available for sale for \$20, and Symonds will generously donate the proceeds to the Ellington Historical Society.

June 2018 meeting, Thursday, June 28th 6:30 p.m. at the Hall Memorial Library

Annual potluck supper (Members Only)