



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum, 492 Main St., Portland, CT, 06480, Tel: 860-342-5455
www.PortlandHistSoc.Org email: PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2010 was certainly a busy year for the Society with many exciting exhibits, well-attended monthly program meetings, various community outreach activities, and successful fundraising events.

Exhibits led the way with new themes including Portland Industries and Minerals, 1936 Flood, Vintage Wedding Dresses, One-room Schools, artwork from the Gildersleeve School third graders "Precious Pieces of Portland" contest as well as the Holiday Exhibit, "Twelve Days of Christmas". I'm grateful to Phyllis Frisbie, Deb Ellsworth and Claire Frisbie, who led the exhibit team through all the hard work that goes into creating wonderful exhibits for our monthly openings.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Regina Woltmann who planned our very interesting and informative monthly programs; to Eleanor Crowther and Chris Sullivan for organizing the Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale event; to the newly formed Trustee Board for their expertise, to Claire and Phyllis Frisbie for their dedication in publishing our quarterly newsletter; to Gene Sullivan for ensuring that we have adequate docent coverage at our monthly openings, to all the hard-working committee members who assisted me with the Society's outreach and fundraising activities; to all our dedicated members who have worked so diligently behind the scenes to help our



The children "slept tight" in the antique roped bed.



Santa leaving the Society's Holiday Exhibit

organization and museum function; and to the many members and friends who have supported our activities throughout the year.

Upcoming Fundraiser: Plans are underway for a **Fashion Show and Tea**, co-sponsored with Zion Lutheran Church, to be held in the fall of 2011. The event will feature a runway fashion show highlighting clothing styles from various decades. It will also include a sale of vintage jewelry as well as a display of photos and other memorabilia showcasing the many design changes that have occurred over the years. If you would like to help with this event or have a garment to donate or loan for the show, please call me at 342-0433.

Membership Drive: Have you renewed your membership? Your generous contribution and membership in the Portland Historical Society helps provide funding for our educational programs, maintenance of our museum, preservation of Portland's historical treasures, as well as your subscription to the Society's newsletter. Please consider joining today or renewing your membership if you haven't already done so.

Since my term as President of the Society officially ends in January 2011, I would like to thank my fellow board members for their dedication and support over the past year. It has been a pleasure working with you and others who have served on the Executive Board for the past eight years.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year,
Sue Anderson

NOTES . . .



Winners of the “Precious Pieces of Portland” contest (top row): Olivia Smith, First Place; Olivia Doering, Second Place; and Dillon Daoud, Third Place. Honorable Mentions (bottom row): Hannah Prince, Janelle Field, and Steven Li.

“Precious Pieces of Portland” Contest

In October, the Portland Historical Society invited all the Gildersleeve School third graders to participate in the contest, “Precious Pieces of Portland”. The contest corresponded with their study of Portland’s history and tour of many significant historical sites in town.

The students were encouraged to create a postcard, postage stamp, or coin depicting their favorite part of Portland along with a written explanation of the importance of their design. Their entries were judged on neatness, creativity, spelling, and accuracy of information.

Eileen Katz, Principal of Gildersleeve Elementary School and Candi Meadors, a Special Education teacher at the school, along with Portland Historical Society officers, Susanne Anderson and Deb Ellsworth judged the entries. Winners of the contest were: Olivia Smith, First Place; Olivia Doering, Second Place; and Dillon Daoud, Third Place. Honorable Mentions were awarded to Hannah Prince, Janelle Field, and Steven Li.

The first, second, and third place winners received a \$50 savings bond. All contest entrants received a certificate of participation and a special pencil from the Society during their class visit to the Museum in November.

All of the students’ work was on display at The Ruth Callander Museum of Portland History, at 492 Main Street, on Sunday, November 7. In addition to the students’ work, an exhibit of Portland’s one-room schools was on display at the Museum.

Costume Jewelry Donations & Future Sale Plans

As a follow-up to the very successful Spring Tea of 2009, plans are beginning for a Fall 2011 Fashion Show that would include the sale of vintage jewelry. The Society is accepting donations of vintage jewelry pieces at any time during the year.

We would appreciate styles from any decade, as we have found that the variety of items at our previous sales was really appreciated by the shoppers. Pieces marked with a designer’s name have been quite popular. This includes Sarah Coventry, Monet, Napier, Avon, and other designers from the 50’s – 80’s. Beaded necklaces, brooches, and sterling silver jewelry were also hot-ticket items at our previous sales.

It may surprise you to learn that we are also accepting broken jewelry pieces, loose beads, and single earrings (pierced or clip) at this time. We have found that crafters are searching for unique broken pieces, and we can package these items together for the sale. When donating broken or mis-matched items, please put them in a separate bag or box and label them as such.

We hope that you will think of the Society if you come across some suitable jewelry pieces for our sale. Please contact Mary Ann Dolan (342-0594) or Susanne Anderson (342-0433) and we will arrange for a committee member to pick up your donation. Thank you in advance for your contributions to our next vintage jewelry sale!



First place entry to the “Precious Pieces of Portland” contest by Olivia Smith.

HISTORY . . .

Society member, Thomas Graham Johnson, provides interesting family and Civil War history.

“I was browsing through the Society Coloring Book when I came upon the page showing the ship J C Kuhn built in Gildersleeve. My great - great grandfather, George Graham, served aboard this ship during the Civil War! On the mantle over our fireplace I display the carbine he was issued and the original tintype in the fold-up frame of George in his naval uniform.

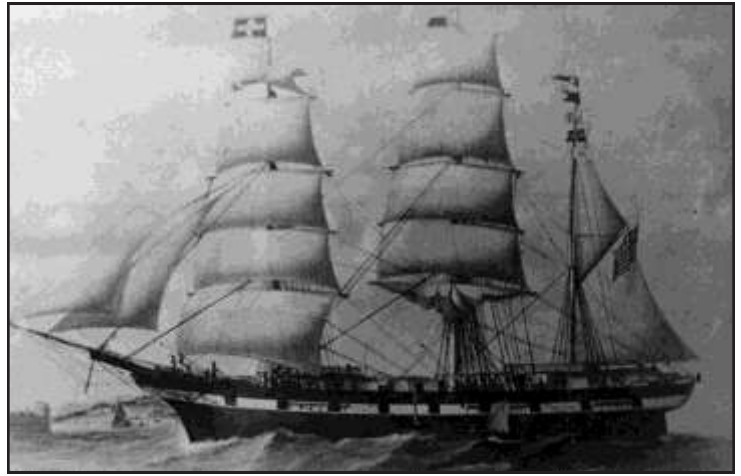
You can file this under "small world isn't it?" as well; My grandfather, Oscar Johnson of 321 Main Street, went to New York in the early years of the twentieth century to learn photography, a hot item at the time. While there in Brooklyn, he met and married (in about 1913) Genevieve Murray, whose grandfather was George Graham, with whom she lived. She and Oscar had a son in 1915, Charles Graham Johnson, my father. Genevieve died in 1918 of the Spanish flu leaving my grandfather a young widower. He later remarried to Minny (Anderson) the grandmother I knew growing up at 321 Main. George Graham didn't know Portland from a hole in the ground but the ship he served on in the Civil War was built there and his descendants lived there!”

Information from the U S Navy Website provided by Sue Anderson

J. C. Kuhn was a wooden bark of two decks and three masts built at Portland, Conn., in 1859. She was purchased by the Navy at New York City from J. H. Brower & Co., July 6, 1861, and commissioned at New



Shipmate George Graham



***Barque J.C. Kuhn, built in 1859 by S. Gildersleeve & Sons
From a painting by D. M. McFarlane, 1860***

York Navy Yard August 23, Acting Master Robert G. Lee in command.

The supply and coal vessel reported to the Gulf Blockading Squadron at Key West, Florida September 11 bringing a cargo of coal, lumber, and whaleboats. Six days later she delivered coal and provisions to Union vessels off Fort Pickins, Florida to begin her record of dependable service carrying fuel, food, lumber, and water to Union ships in the Gulf of Mexico and the lower Mississippi.

She arrived below Vicksburg June 27, 1862 loaded with coal for Flag Officer Farragut's ships the day before they daringly steamed under the Southern batteries there to join forces with Flag Officer Davis's Mississippi Flotilla, which had been fighting its way south along the river. She remained below Vicksburg supporting Commander Porter's Mortar Flotilla while Farragut operated above the Confederate stronghold until his ships had again run the gauntlet to rejoin Porter July 15.

She then sailed down river with Farragut and resumed her duty of transporting supplies from Pensacola to ships stationed along the Gulf Coast. In the spring of 1864, J. C. Kuhn was ordered to Pensacola for service as ordnance and store ship, and she continued this duty until sailing for New York January 20, 1866. After arriving at New York February 14 and discharging her stores, the veteran bark received badly needed repairs. Restored and refurbished, J. C. Kuhn stood down to the Battery April 7, and 3 days later was renamed Purveyor. As Purveyor, she supplied the European and South Atlantic Squadrons and served as a store ship before being sold at New York to P. H. Fay July 7, 1869.

Ring In the “New” to Preserve the “Old”

As the time for developing the 2011 Society Budget was approaching, the Membership Committee took a look at the dues structure which has been in place since 1995/1996.

In order to continue the benefits of membership, the Committee recommended to the Executive Board that Individual and Family dues be increased by \$5 each. A new level of Patron was established for those who want to provide a higher level of support. A Student/Youth category was added to encourage younger citizens to take an interest in becoming actively involved in the Society. Dues for those 60 years and older have not been raised. The Lifetime Membership will not increase until January 1, 2012, giving you the opportunity to join at the current rate for one more year.

All these recommendations were approved by the Executive Board, and voted in at the Membership Meeting on November 9, 2010.

Please return the form on page 5 by February 15. That will save us the expense of postage to send you a reminder.

Your membership renewal is crucial for it provides funds to support the increased cost of printing and mailing the Newsletter, allows us to offer small gratuities to interesting speakers for the Membership Meetings, and assists in funding all the ongoing and periodic expenses related to operating an Historical Museum. We look forward to hearing from you.

Linda Cunningham for the Membership Committee



Second place entry to the “Precious Pieces of Portland” contest by Olivia Doering.

Programs

Our January program will be the Annual Meeting with the election of officers, the presentation of the William Van Beynum Awards and an overview of “The Society in 2010” by Bob McDougall. The meeting will be January 25, at 7:30 pm at the Mary Flood Room of the Portland Library.

Future programs will be announced in the local newspapers. Watch for Society programs at the Portland Library on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Regina Woltmann - Program Committee

Civil War Anniversary

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, the Society is planning an exhibit. Are you the descendant of a Civil War Veteran? Do you have information or items that you would like to loan to the Society and share with the community in an exhibit? (If you prefer items may be scanned or photographed.) Please contact PortlandHistSoc@Yahoo.Com or call Chris Sullivan at 860-342-4105.

Exhibits Committee

The Portland Historical Society, Inc. Membership Form

To become a member of the Portland Historical Society, please print, complete, and return this form by **February 15** with your check made payable to: Portland Historical Society, c/o Membership, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480-0098.

Adult Member: _____

Adult Member: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Email: _____

Member 18 and under: _____ (age/grade) _____

Member 18 and under: _____ (age/grade) _____

Member 18 and under: _____ (age/grade) _____

I would like to receive my newsletter and event notices:

In the mail Via Email

Membership Category:

Please circle one: New Member Renewal Gift

- Student (18 and under)..... \$10.00
- Senior (60+)..... \$10.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family..... \$25.00
- Business Sponsor \$50.00
- Patron..... \$100.00
- Individual Lifetime Member.....\$250.00

Included is a donation to the Callander House Endowment Fund for \$_____

I would be interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- Fundraisers Bake Sale
- Refreshments Docent Duty
- Annual Tag Sale Yard Work
- Exhibits



Becky Robinson and Rick Gildersleeve enjoyed an afternoon at the Museum as docents helping with the Gildersleeve School students tour. The student pictured is Jack Wright.

Docents--Greeters--Hosts--Hostesses

Each month on the first Sunday, from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM, our museum is open to the public. In order for us to maintain this schedule it is necessary for a few members of the Society to be on hand to open and close the museum, to greet our visitors and to handle the every day tasks associated with the sale of our calendars, tea towels, commemorative crockery and books.

This is a minimum investment of your time with a maximum reward: It affords a perfectly leisurely chance to view and learn about our museum with its many and varied exhibits. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet with and share your appreciation of Portland's heritage with friends, neighbors and visitors from near and far.

You don't have to know a great deal about Portland's history, and you'll certainly learn some things you didn't know and have fun doing so. So call Gene Sullivan (860) 342-0306 and tell him you'd be delighted to spend a part of one Sunday afternoon as a Docent/Greeter/Host/or Hostess. He'll work with you to schedule what fits with your time and the needs of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. You may also e-mail Gene at: teamsullivan1@comcast.net.

2011 Portland Heritage Calendar



The **2011 Portland Heritage Calendar, Gone but not forgotten...homes from Portland's past.** The historical pictures chosen for this year's calendar came from the "Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut," done in the late 1930s. It recorded sixty-two of Portland's historic buildings, sixteen of which are no longer standing. The calendar shows a dozen houses which were standing in the 1930s and *were deemed to be of historical importance, but are no longer standing.* On the cover is a portrait of a colonial house, probably the 1765 Jonathan Penfield house, which stood at the southwest corner of Penfield Hill and Pepperridge roads until 1969, when it was dismantled. The calendars are priced at \$8 each and can be purchased at the Society's Museum or at one of the following locations: Portland Town Hall, Portland Library, Gotta's Farm, Bordanaro's The Medicine Centre, Gildersleeve Spirit Shop, Tierney Bros. Package Store and Portland Discount Liquors.

FROM THE CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

Gone But Not Forgotten...
...homes from Portland's past



2011 Calendar



PORTLAND SCENES
HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS
TILE & MUG
Hand painted by
Connecticut Artist
Ornament \$12 Tile \$12
Mug \$9.50



2011
PORTLAND
HERITAGE
CALENDAR
Houses from
Portland's Past
Price: \$8/ea.



**PORTLAND
RECIPES &
REFLECTIONS**
A wonderful
collection of
recipe favorites
of 100 Society
members &
friends. \$8.



IMAGES PORTLAND
Robert McDougall
128 pages of
history in photos
of Portland. \$20

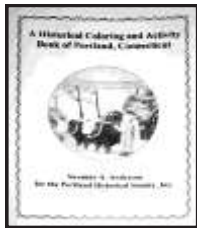


MAGNETS (approx. 1-3/4"x 2-5/8") of
40+ views of **PORTLAND POSTCARD
Scenes** (Portland/Middletown ferry
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hanging.)



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6 Town Hall/Buck Library
7 Trinity Church
8 Nathaniel White House
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Phone order: Call Sue Anderson at (860) 342-0433
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Name _____
Address _____
City, ST, ZIP _____
Phone _____

QUANTITY	ITEM	COST	TOTAL
Shipping: Please add \$2 for each \$12 of order			
Total cost of order			

CALENDAR

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

Jan 25 - **Annual Meeting and Election of Officers,**
“Review of 2010 Portland Historical
Society Activities” by Bob McDougall

Feb 22

Mar 22

Apr 26

May 24

Jun 28



*Membership Programs and
meetings. For further details,
please watch the
Rivereast News Bulletin.*



Portland's Civil War Memorial

NEWSLETTER - *Claire and Phyllis Frisbie, 1-14-11*

Newsletter

Ruth Freeburg
George Gilbert
Eugene Sullivan

DIRECTORS

President - Susanne Anderson
1st Vice President - Deborah Ellsworth
2nd Vice President - Martha Luteci
Recording Secretary - Linda Cunningham
Corresponding Secretary - Joanne Luppi
Treasurer - James McCabe

2010

SOCIETY OFFICERS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM ENCLOSED!

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