



Ellington Historical Society

P.O. Box 73

Ellington, Conn. 06029

June 2010 Newsletter

June Meeting Notice

The Ellington Historical Society will hold its annual meeting and potluck supper on Thursday, June 24, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at Hall Memorial Library at 93 Main Street. Those with last names beginning with A-M are asked to bring a salad. Those with last names beginning with N-Z are asked to bring a main dish. Beverages will be provided. Our traditional strawberry shortcake will be served for dessert.

Following the supper, we will hold our annual meeting during which we will elect officers for 2010/11. A slate of officers will be presented and nominations can also be made from the floor.



Nellie McKnight Museum to be open on CT Open House Day

The Nellie McKnight Museum will be open on Saturday, June 12 for Connecticut Open House Day. Free admission from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. On display is an exhibit featuring Daniel Halladay, an Ellington inventor who developed the first self-governing windmill. Additional docents would be welcome. For more information, or to volunteer, call Tim Fahy.

News from the Curator-Nancy Long

Flea Market/Bake Sale

Our Flea Market and Bake Sale were a success in spite of the weather. May 8 brought thunder showers that discouraged the half dozen brave souls who set up their booths for the flea market. We made calls to all the participants and invited them to set up again the following Saturday

May 15. This was a glorious sunny day with most of the vendors setting up for sales. We sold 29 of the 31 available spaces! Many thanks to Dave Lehmann who fielded the calls, sent out applications, laid out the field and signed in folks as they showed up.

Inside the museum the bake sale hummed along on May 8 thanks to the public who came to visit the Fair on the Green. Any leftovers from the sale were used for the EHS hosted Local Historians meeting held at Hall Memorial Library and will be an additional feature for dessert at our potluck supper. We thank all of our bakers-we couldn't do this fundraiser without you! Special thanks to Mildred Dimock who made all of those phone calls and to our members who staffed the bake sale.

School Tours

Tim Fahy and Nancy Long visited the third grades at Center School on May 25 and will visit Windermere School on June 7. Items from the museum collection were brought for discussion with the children with the focus kept on chores a child might do with each piece. A rug beater, wash board, oil lamp, iron, and popcorn popper were among the items shown to the classes followed by tools for ice harvesting and a talk about what the word icebox really means. The students were invited to visit the museum this summer while on summer vacation.

Herb Garden

The herb garden on the museum grounds has been planted and mulched. Thank you to the Tussie Mussies from the Ellington Women's Club for their efforts getting the garden ready and maintaining it through the summer season.

News from the President-Tim Fahy

A special thank you goes out to our Curator, Nancy Long, for all the behind the scenes work she does to prepare the museum for opening and to make sure the Bake Sale and Flea Market happen. Nancy is also responsible for the display in the library as well as the Daniel Halladay display in the museum.

News from the Archivist- Lynn Kloter Fahy

Recent Donations

On the day of the Fair on the Green in May, slides of the Nellie McKnight Museum taken in 1989 were donated by Barbara M. Davis of Ellington. They were taken by photographer Fred Bird for a school project that Barbara's son did. We are fortunate to have this set of interior and exterior photographs to document what the museum looked like 21 years ago. The slides will make a good program for an historical society meeting in the future.

Also, donated by Bob Villanova on the same day was a set of architectural drawings of a 1890s house in the Shenipsit Street neighborhood. The architect was J. Henry McCray, who designed the Ellington Town Hall among many other local buildings.

Thompson Family Letters

Sally Thompson Bissell recently donated a thick volume of early Thompson family letters she has transcribed. Sally is a descendant of Margaret Thompson, one of the early settlers of Melrose, settling here in the mid 1700s. For many years, the Thompsons ran a cider and vinegar business on their farm on route 140 on the Ellington – East Windsor line. They now raise Black Angus cattle and grow feed corn and lumber.

The letters are letters sent to the family at the farm over the years from 1784 to 1868. They are a real treasure of Ellington and area history, giving a picture of life here over nearly a century, in a time period when records are difficult to find. Sally put in many, many hours of work transcribing these letters and adding genealogical and source information to put the letters in context. Some of the letters are shown as written as well as transcribed. The volume also has some pictures of houses belonging to Thompson descendants.

The Thompson family has long had a tradition of valuing its history; the historical society already had in its collection a large photo display of Thompson family members made for the celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of John and Ann Thompson in 1873 and a Thompson family genealogy published in 1916 by the Thompson Family Association. The Thompson family continues its interest in historic preservation; they are now restoring the family's 210 year old hay barn in Melrose.

The Thompson family is of special interest to the society because our benefactor, Nellie McKnight, was a Thompson descendant. Her grandmother was Mary Thompson who married James Dixon McKnight of the McKnight Farm on Sadds Mill Road, where Nellie grew up. Other familiar families related to the Thompsons and included in the volume are the Abbots, the Ellsworths, the Hydes, the Wallaces, and the Willeys.

We thank Sally Bissell for her hard work transcribing the letters and adding supporting information and for her generosity in donating a copy to Ellington Historical Society. (Thompson letter donation description was written by Shirley Hayden).

Genealogy survey

Ellington resident Francie Berger, an intern at the Hall Memorial Library, is conducting research on behalf of the library as part of her studies at SCSU. A letter and the survey follow. Also, Francie is trying to fill in missing issues in the library's collection of Ellington town reports. If you have copies of **1897, 1904, 1966/1967, 1987/1988** that you would be willing to donate to the library, contact Francie at francieberger@yahoo.com

Francie Berger
5 Cliff Street
Ellington, CT 06029
francieberger@yahoo.com

Dear Ellington Historical Society Member,

I am a graduate student at Southern Connecticut State University, studying for my Masters of Library Science degree. I am requesting your help in conducting research aimed at “Enhancing Access to Genealogical Research Resources at Hall Memorial Library, Ellington, Connecticut.” This exercise is part of my Special Project/Thesis class and will count toward the completion of my degree.

I am looking for as many Ellington Historical Society members as possible to participate in a short survey. This survey will be used to complete a research study that will be used in determining the level of interest in genealogical research amongst library patrons as well as discovering what types of information in this field are sought. The results of this study will be used to create a guide for patrons that will assist them in doing genealogical and local history research.

If you would like to help me with this project, please complete the survey and return it in the drop box on the circulation desk near the book return slot. Or you may return the survey to Jim or Nancy Long at the next Historical Society Meeting on June 24. If you cannot print this survey out, Jim and Nancy will have extra copies at the June 24 meeting; please ask them for one and fill it out then. It is important that I receive as many completed surveys as possible.

Please note that once completed surveys are received, results will remain anonymous. No names will be published in the finished product. All data collected will be kept in a secure and locked place for three years. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail me at francieberger@yahoo.com.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Francie Berger
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Ellington Historical Society Member Survey on Genealogical Research

For each of the following questions, please rate your level of interest using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest level of interest and 1 indicating no interest in the subject area. For the final questions, please choose a yes or no answer.

GENERAL INTEREST

1. I am interested in conducting genealogical/family history research.

5	4	3	2	1
very interested	somewhat interested	not sure	minimal interest	no interest

2. Other members of my family are interested in conducting genealogical/family research.

5	4	3	2	1
very interested	somewhat interested	not sure	minimal interest	no interest

3. I or another family member belongs to the Ellington Historical Society.

yes	no
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4. I or another member my family belongs to a Genealogy Society.

yes	no
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For each of the following questions, please rate how important each of the reasons given for doing genealogical or local history research is to you, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating great importance and 1 indicating no importance.

REASONS TO CONDUCT GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

1. I want to create my family tree.

5	4	3	2	1
great importance	fair importance	some importance	minimal importance	no importance

2. I hope to find missing relatives.

5	4	3	2	1
great importance	fair importance	some importance	minimal importance	no importance

3. I want to know if I am related to anyone famous.

5	4	3	2	1
great importance	fair importance	some importance	minimal importance	no importance

4. I want to prove I had an ancestor who fought in the Revolutionary War so I can join the Daughters of the American Revolution (or another war/organization).

5	4	3	2	1
great importance	fair importance	some importance	minimal importance	no importance

5. I want to confirm my ethnic or religious background.

3. I will use books and/or magazines I have purchased for research.

yes maybe no

4. I will use websites accessed via the library (i.e. HeritageQuest.com).

yes maybe no

5. I will use websites I can access on my own (i.e.familysearch.org)

yes maybe no

6. I will use websites for which I have paid subscription fees.

yes maybe no

7. I will use software I have purchased (i.e. Family Tree Maker).

yes maybe no

8. I will visit cemeteries to do research.

yes maybe no

WORKSHOPS AND TALKS

1. I would be interested in attending a workshop on how to get started doing genealogical research.

yes maybe no

2. I would be interested in attending a talk given by a member of the Ellington Historical Society on items they have that might help me with my research.

yes maybe no

3. I would be interested in attending a talk given by a member of the Ellington Town Hall on items they have that might help me with my research.

yes maybe no

4. I would be interested in attending a workshop on how to write and document my family history.

yes maybe no

5. I would be interested in individualized assistance with more complex genealogical research issues.

yes maybe no

Please add any other thoughts or comments that you have in the space below.

Please return this survey to the box on the circulation desk by the book return slot. All responses will remain anonymous. Thank you for your assistance.