

National Book Award-winning author, Edward Ball, to Headline Civil War Day

A common question to a person completing his family history is, "Did you find any horse thieves?" In the case of Edward Ball, the acclaimed author of *Slaves in the Family*, he grew up knowing that his family, the owners of 20 rice plantations near Charleston, South Carolina, also enslaved close to 4000 people. The Ball family, which sent twelve sons to fight for the Confederacy, today numbers 150. The descendants of "Ball slaves" include more than 100,000 living Americans. In his talk, "Slaves in the Family – One Slave Dynasty Before and After the Civil War," Ball will address the question, "What do they share?"

Ball remembers that throughout his childhood his father, an Episcopal minister, would say partly in jest, "There are five things we do not discuss in the Ball family: sex, money, religion, death and the Negroes." But as an adult, Edward sought to uncover the painful truth of his family's past. His quest took him to Ball family records housed in a number of archives and to the Freedmen's Bureau records to find the descendants of slaves who had worked on Ball plantations. He traveled the country to meet these descendants, some of whom were his blood kin, to hear their stories. The book that resulted reveals how the effects of slavery live on in black life and memory.

Edward Ball is the author of five books of history and other nonfiction, including *Slaves in the Family* (1998). *Slaves in the Family* tells the story of the author's slaveholding family as well as the stories of ten of the black families they once enslaved. The book won the National Book Award for nonfiction, was a *New York Times* bestseller, was featured on *Oprah*, and was translated into several languages. Edward Ball's other books include *The Sweet Hell Inside* (2001), the story of an affluent African-American family that rose from

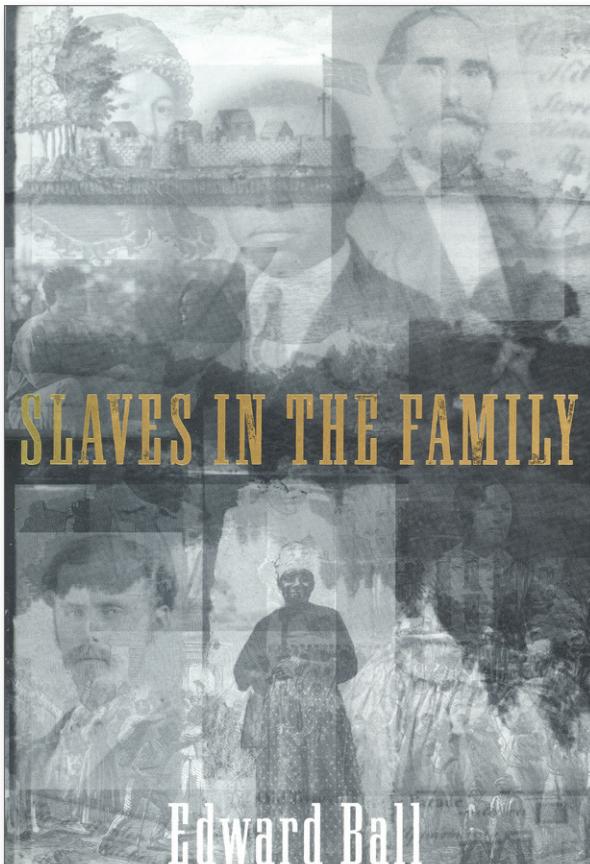


the ashes of the Civil War to become artists and musicians during the Jazz Age and *The Inventor and the Tycoon* (2013), a story of the birth of moving pictures. Copies of *Slaves in the Family* will be available for purchase and inscription.

Participants will be treated to the music of Tom Callinan, Connecticut's first Official State Troubadour. Callinan will sing popular songs from the Civil War era featured on his newest CD, "The Forlorn Soldier," including "We are Coming, Father Abra'am," and "Tenting Tonight." He will also present his original compositions, "Connecticut's Fighting 14th," in honor of the 14th Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, and "The Forlorn Soldier," originally sung at a ceremony surrounding the removal of the Forlorn Soldier statue from Airport Road in Hartford for restoration and eventual relocation to the Connecticut State Capitol.

The Mansfield House backyard will be the scene of an encampment of Civil War re-enactors who portray soldiers

(continued on next page)



Civil War Day, continued from page 1.

from Company F of the 14th CVI. They will demonstrate camp life, conduct drills, and cook over smoky campfires. Civilian re-enactors enhance this living history event by displaying medical tools of the day and illuminating other activities necessary to the operation of an army. The group donates its honoraria to battlefield preservation in keeping with its mission of "education, historic preservation, and authenticity."

Civil War Day will be held on Saturday, September 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The encampment of the 14th CVI will be continuous throughout the day, with Tom Callinan performing at 10:30 and Edward Ball speaking at 12 noon. In the event of heavy rain, the encampment will be cancelled, but the musical performance and talk will be held inside. Admission for this event is \$5, with children 12 and under free. Civil War Day is generously sponsored by Colebrook Financial Company LLC, the Community Health Center, and Bill & Susan Ryczek. 

*Director's Message*

Dear Members,

*J*hope that all of you have had a summer filled with all the activities that you love. Here at the Society we have been busy planning our next exhibit and helping researchers from Connecticut and all over the country. Recent visitors have been from Alaska, California, Indiana, Rhode Island, Oregon, Texas, New York, Tennessee, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Illinois, Utah, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Kentucky, Ohio, and Australia.

Volunteers have been busy cataloging artifacts and manuscripts, working in the gardens, and helping out at events. In May, we said goodbye to graduating senior Emma Rothberg, who had curated exhibits and cataloged manuscripts since the beginning of her freshman year at Wesleyan and to Matthew Weinstein, who had been with us for three years, compiling oral histories and helping out where needed. This month Catherine Zaczek, who has been cataloging artifacts and mounting exhibits since the summer of 2010, will be going to the University of Maryland to pursue a master's degree in speech pathology.

We wish Emma, Matthew, and Catherine well as they make their way in the world. They all promised to come back to visit!

In preparation to writing the article about Dean Acheson's go-cart, I searched in our archives for other memoirs from the late 19th to early 20th centuries and found quite a few, including one written by Governor Raymond Baldwin, one of Acheson's boyhood friends. These memoirs are valuable sources of information about life in Middletown and its inhabitants. I would encourage you to write down your memories and donate a copy of your finished manuscripts to the Society so your stories will not be forgotten. Fifty years from now, stories from 1950 will be over a century old and of interest to those living then. Today's events are tomorrow's history!


Debby Shapiro

SOCIETY NEWS

Society Welcomes New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Jason Arnold, Linda Bettencourt, Steve & Audrey Cooper, Barbara Edelstein, Marianne English, Tyler Fleming, Lee Godburn, Gary Keating, Kelly Marino, Barbara Cass Pamboukes, Barbara Smallshaw, and Robert Watrous and our newest life members, Susan & Sidney Rothberg. They share our enthusiasm for preserving Middletown's history and passing it down to future generations. We look forward to seeing them at upcoming events.

Membership renewals went out in April, and many of you have generously responded, for which we are most grateful. For those of you who have not, we hope it is because you have mislaid the membership envelope and not because you no longer wish to be a member. In order to continue to receive the *Historical Observer*, other membership notices, and free admission to our exhibits, please renew at your earliest convenience. We don't want to lose anyone! 

Rose Garden Continues to Grow

The Garden Gathering designed to showcase our rose garden was a big success. Due to the threat of rain, Marci Martin's talk was moved inside where she spoke about the many roses in her garden and showed the most beautiful pictures of every type and color of roses imaginable. To the delight of the participants, each one went home with a rose from McInerney's Flower Shop and Greenhouses. The overall sponsor of the event was Connecticut Underwriters, Inc.

After the talk, our guests were able to tour the gardens and smell our roses. Additional roses have been purchased by Sally & Sal D'Aquila, in memory of Maurica D'Aquila; Nancy & Michael Rogalsky in memory of Francis & Mary O'Neil and Barbara & Benjamin Rogalsky; the Kalita family in memory of Lena Kalita; Edward J. Kalita in memory of Lena Cannata Kalita; the Kalita family in memory of Viola Cannata Bozzi; Nancy & Michael Bell in memory of Jerome & Phyllis McGee; and Lauralane & Rich Feitel in honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of Vito & Carol Bonaiuto. 



Coming Soon— Expanded Civil War Exhibit

Buck Zaidel, our chairman of the museum committee, and co-author of *Heroes for All Time: Connecticut Civil War Soldiers Tell Their Stories*, is also an avid collector of photographs of Civil War soldiers and of other war-related artifacts. As part of Civil War Day, there will be a display of selected items from his collection for viewing. He has exhibited at shows and museums across the country, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and we are fortunate to be able to tap into his wide knowledge of the Civil War, particularly from the viewpoint of the every day soldier in the field. 



Middlesex County Historical Society Membership Application

Your membership in the Middlesex County Historical Society helps provide funding for the preservation of Middlesex County's historical treasures as well as your subscription to the *Historical Observer* and discounts to many of the Society's events.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Membership Levels

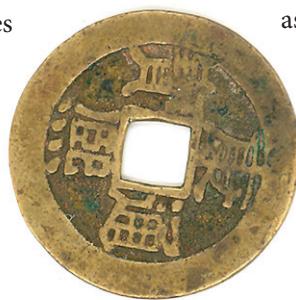
<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Business \$60
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$125
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500

Please make checks payable to The Middlesex County Historical Society. Detach and send to General Mansfield House, 151 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457

Mystery Chinese Coin Found in Floorboards

A Chinese coin, possibly from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), was found in the floorboards in the Captain Joseph Smith house, located at what is now 505 Main Street when it was dismantled in the 1980's. According to research conducted by Trudy Rumberger, a long-time supporter of the Society, the house was built for Captain Smith sometime between 1780 and 1783. He was a privateer during the Revolutionary War, commanding the *Dolphin*, *Daphne*, and the *Chatham* and probably used the profits from his ventures to build the elegant hip-roofed house. Marine lists in the Middlesex Gazette paint a picture of a sea captain heavily involved in the Caribbean trade.

In 1797, Capt. Smith sold the house to another sea captain, George Starr. Starr was married to Ann Carnell,



the niece and heiress of Captain Philip Mortimer, the prominent merchant and owner of the town's largest rope walk. Starr deeded the house in 1801 to James Casey of New York City, who, with his wife Susannah, raised eight children to adulthood in the home. One of their children became a doctor and mayor of Middletown. The house saw much activity over the years, but neither of the seafarers who owned it has been documented as being in the China trade, unlike another of Middletown's prominent citizens, Samuel Russell, whose business, Russell & Co., was based in Canton, China.

The coin was donated to the Society by its finders, members Welles and Lee Guilmartin, later owners of the house. How did it get there? Who dropped it through a crack in the floor? If only the walls could talk. 

Sheedy Contest Delights Students and Parents Alike

The Society held another successful William E. Sheedy Memorial History Contest this year. Bill Sheedy, the Society's longtime treasurer, also had another role — that of leading third graders on tours of the Mansfield House as part of their annual field trips. He instilled a love of history in countless students and the contest aims to carry on his legacy. Third grade students pick an ancestor to learn about what their childhood was like and how it differed from their own, what they did as adults, and how their family's history fits into that of our country. Stories about service in World War II and Vietnam are common as are ones of survival during the Great Depression. Many parents have told us that this contest has been a wonderful bonding experience within their families, and grandparents have said that they never would have recounted their



childhood memories without the contest. The contest was co-ordinated by committee chairperson, Nancy Rogalsky, with the help of committee members, Rosemary Shea, Nancy Bauer, and Debby Shapiro and was generously underwritten by William E. Sheedy, Jr. and his family. This year's winners were Rosalee Otis, Joseph Silvestro, Ariana Bafumi, Julianne Pickett, Gioa Biales, Oskar Ruser, Cameron Cook, Sydney Hunter, Sydney Tuttle, Nathanael Rodbourn, Diya Patel, Obsidian Rodriguez, Isabella Lane, Dahlia Goldblatt, and Elise Kennedy. 

30th Annual Car Show a Tribute to Jarvis Barton



As many of you will remember, the Society's annual antique and classic car show over the years has featured a number of vehicles from the earliest days of automobiles including Ford Model T's and Model A's, but the splashiest one was the Packard touring car owned by the late Jarvis Barton. "Jarve" would drive into the show in his tomato-red 1933 Packard V-12 Coupe Convertible followed by a procession of his other cars to the "ooh's" and "ah's" of the spectators. On Sunday, October 4, you will have your chance to view this fabulous car, now owned by Jarve's longtime friend, Bruce Woronoff.

The 30th Annual Car Show and Flea Market will be held at Palmer Field adjacent to Washington Street in Middletown. Car registration begins at 8:30 am and judging starts at 11:30 am with trophies awarded at 2:30 pm. General admission is \$3.00 and children 12 and under are free. Car registration is \$10.00. Although cars registered for judging must be dated 1990 or older, there is no cut-off date for cars being placed in the car corral. In case of rain, the show will be held Sunday, October 11. There will be balloons for children 12 and under.

In the early 1930s, Packard was the most sought after luxury quality automobile made in America. The 1933 V-12 coupe sold new for \$4,500. It weighed 5,500 lbs with a 142 inch wheelbase. It came with a 445 cubic-inch engine generating 160 horsepower. There were 50 V-12 Convertible Coupe Roadsters produced in 1933. Our featured car was driven 2950 miles from Seattle to Portland, CT in 1997 by Jarvis Barton and his friend, Tom Engel, in 4 ½ days. They reported experiencing two flat tires and the most spectacular scenery imaginable.

The Middletown Sports Hall of Fame at Palmer Field will also be open to visitors beginning at 10 am during the Show. Trophies, hand-made by the committee, consisting of chairman Rich Bergan, Jerry Augustine, Pete Bozzo, Mark Olerud, Jack Pieper, Seb Sbacio, and Debby Shapiro will be awarded to the top 30 vehicles. Flea market spaces are \$15.00 and the market opens at 7:00 am. For more information, call the Society at 860-346-0746. 

Society Acquisition Recalls Nostalgic Past

“*T*he golden age of childhood can be quite accurately fixed in time and place.” So wrote Dean Acheson, future Secretary of State for President Harry Truman, as he described his early years in Middletown. In his memoir *Morning and Noon*, he recalled with great fondness the sound of horses’ hooves on shaded streets, the roaring forge in the blacksmith’s shop, and playing in the three acre field behind Church of the Holy Trinity. The neighborhood boys stormed San Juan Hill while running into the drying laundry and played cops

and robbers through the narrow alleys.

Dean’s father was the Right Reverend Edward Campion Acheson, the rector of Holy Trinity and later Episcopal Bishop of Connecticut, and his mother was

Eleanor Gooderham Acheson. The rectory was on Broad Street and it is easy to picture Mrs. Acheson wheeling young Dean up and down the street in the Society’s recent acquisition, his wicker baby go-cart. Donated by Craig and Robin Wallett, the go-cart had been purchased at a parish thrift sale by Craig’s mother and passed down through the family. 



Visit the Society’s booth at the Open Air Market at the Wadsworth Mansion on Sunday, August 30

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Museum at the Mansfield House

OPEN Monday–Thursday and Saturday
10:00 to 2:00

Open Air Market at the Wadsworth Mansion

Sunday, August 30, 10:00 to 4:00

Civil War Day at the Mansfield House
Tom Callinan, musical performance
Edward Ball lecture

Saturday, September 12, 10:00 to 3:00
10:30
12 noon

30th Annual Car Show
Palmer Field, Washington Street

Sunday, October 12, 8:30 to 3:00