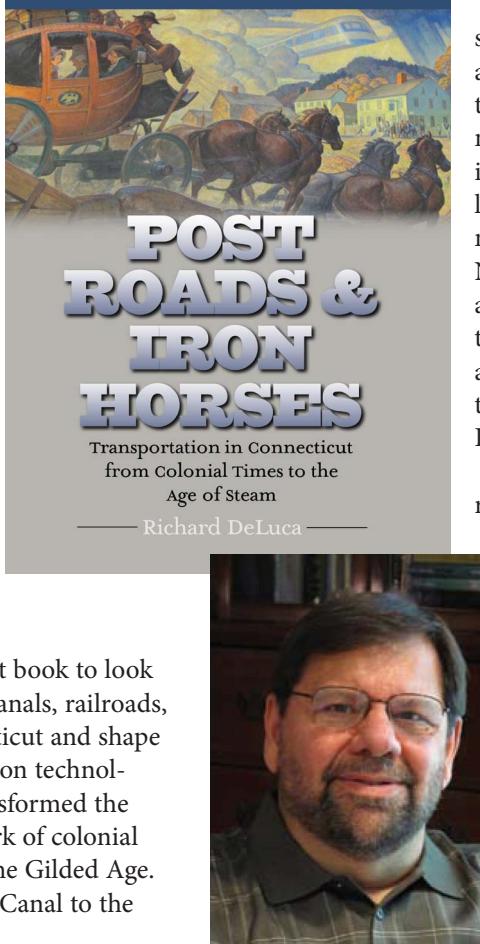


Post Roads and Iron Horses

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is debating whether to reinstitute tolls on I-95 and there is continuing discussion on how to eliminate the traffic lights on Route 9 as it runs through Middletown. It seems everyone talks about the traffic and how to get from here to there. That talk is not new to modern times. Richard DeLuca, the author of *Post Roads and Iron Horses: Transportation in Connecticut from Colonial Times to the Age of Steam*, will address this topic as he delivers the Arthur Schultz Memorial Lecture at the annual meeting of the Society on Tuesday, April 24, at 7:00 pm in the Hubbard Room of the Russell Library, 123 Broad Street, Middletown.

Post Roads & Iron Horses is the first book to look in detail at the turnpikes, steamboats, canals, railroads, and trolleys that helped define Connecticut and shape New England. Advances in transportation technology during the nineteenth century transformed the Constitution State from a rough network of colonial towns to an industrial powerhouse of the Gilded Age. From the race to build the Farmington Canal to the



shift from water to rail transport, historian and transportation engineer DeLuca will tell engaging stories and trace the significant themes that emerge as American innovators and financiers, lawyers and legislators, struggle to control the movement of passengers and goods in southern New England. Highlights of the talk will address the intense competition between the Farmington and Enfield canals and the attempt by the Connecticut River Company to use steamboats on the river above Hartford.

Richard DeLuca has 10 years experience in the field of engineering as a transportation planner. He also spent 20 years researching and writing about aspects of California history. After returning to Connecticut in 1998, DeLuca has been working on a two-volume history of Connecticut transportation while also serving on the editorial board of the journal, *Connecticut History*. After the talk, the author will answer questions and have books available for sale and signing. The lecture will be preceded by the Society's annual business meeting at 6:15 pm. 



Pat Tully, Governor Malloy, and Debby Shapiro

A Memorable Evening

To use an old phrase, "A great time was had by all," is an understatement of the memorable evening that Society members and their guests had at the reception held on April 3 at the Governor's Residence. Guests dined on hors d'oeuvres and desserts provided by the caterer, Grants Restaurant of West Hartford, and enjoyed the jazz and show tunes played by Dianne Rechel on the Residence's baby grand. Floral arrangements courtesy of Cindy Wolfram of Wild Orchid adorned the tables and Dave Wolfram designed an elegant program. Tours were provided by a very knowledgeable docent and the highlight of the evening was a surprise visit by Governor Dan Malloy who welcomed us to "our house." He graciously posed for pictures and spoke to each group of guests.

We would like to thank the following sponsors: Richard & Alexandra Adelstein, May, Bonee & Walsh, Nancy Bauer, George & Camille Camp, Joseph & Katherine Samolis, and Debby Shapiro. 

SOCIETY NEWS

Agenda of Society's Annual Meeting

Preceding the Arthur M. Schultz Memorial Lecture on April 24, the Society will hold its annual meeting at 6:15 pm in the Hubbard Room of the Russell Library. In addition to the adoption of the budget for the coming fiscal year and reports from Treasurer Richard Adelstein, Secretary Nancy Bauer, President Pat Tully, and Director Debby Shapiro, the agenda includes the election of Officers and Directors. The nominating committee chaired by Ron Schatz and including Buck Zaidel and Richard Kamins is pleased to present the following slate to serve two year terms ending March 31, 2014:



President: Patricia Tully

Vice-President: Erik Hesselberg

Secretary: Nancy Bauer

Treasurer: Richard Adelstein

Chairman of Buildings and Grounds:

Joseph Samolis

Chairman of the Museum Committee:

Peter (Buck) Zaidel

Directors at Large: John Bolles III

George Camp, Richard Kamins, William Ryczek, Elizabeth Santangelo, Ronald Schatz

Three members of the Board, Dave Wolfram, Cathy Stebbins, and Marie Kalita-Leary are stepping down after many years of service. We will miss them at the meetings, but look forward to seeing them at our many events. Dave will continue to donate his design skills to our newsletter and other projects. Thank you, Dave, Cathy, and Marie!

Director's Message

Dear Members,

The daffodils have been in bloom in the Mansfield House garden for several weeks now announcing the start of spring and a new round of activities at the Society. I would like to thank Nancy Bauer for organizing a number of our recent events including the memorable reception at the Governor's Residence. She has worked tirelessly to create wider accessibility to the Mansfield House and our programming.

We are beginning to clean up the yard from the winter and prepare it to serve as a venue for meetings and parties. To generate a revenue stream, the Board has decided to open the Mansfield House and Gardens and has adopted an event rental policy. Please contact me if you would like a tour of the house and gardens and to discuss specifics about renting them for your next birthday party, shower, or business meeting.

The Board has also decided to pursue selling advertising in the newsletter and on the website. The newsletter is seen by over 500 people in its print edition and past newsletters will be posted on our website, which is accessed by hundreds more monthly. Call to get advertising rates and to submit an ad.

Pat Tully and I recently appeared on Comcast Cable's "Bauer Hour" and I gave a two hour power-point presentation about early Middletown history and 19th century manufacturing at Middletown Adult Education attended by 30 people. Our programs have been well-attended—over 80 people heard Mary Donohue speak about Connecticut's Jewish farmers at our joint program with Adath Israel Synagogue. We are working very hard to diversify our programming and alert the community to the rich treasures that we have here at the Mansfield House. If any of you have program ideas or topics that you would like to learn more about, please let me know.

Our World War II exhibit will be available for viewing through April. We would like to thank Pete Bozzo and Bob Fralick for lending items from their personal collections to add to the Society's artifacts on display. Thank you also to Wesleyan students Emma Rothberg and Sarah-Anne Tanner for helping to curate this fascinating exhibit.

Please join us at the annual meeting on the 24th.

Debby Shapiro

Fort Monroe—Linked to General Mansfield—Designated National Monument

On November 1, 2011, Fort Monroe, located on Chesapeake Bay's Old Point Comfort in Hampton, Virginia was officially created a National Monument by President Barack Obama. Its origins go as far back as 1609 and it was not decommissioned until September 15, 2011, earning it the distinction as the oldest active military installation in the United States. It remained in Union hands throughout the Civil War and was the site of Union Major General Benjamin Butler's decision to consider escaped slaves who reached Union lines as contraband of war and not be returned to their masters. It earned the name, "Freedom's Fortress," as more than 10,000 escaped slaves journeyed here to secure their freedom. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was also imprisoned here for two years after the war.

Our local interest in Fort Monroe is that General Joseph Mansfield served here after he secured the defenses of Washington at the direct order of President Abraham Lincoln in 1861. He was ordered here under the command of General John Wool in October, 1861 and was involved in arresting seditious and dangerous citizens as well as protecting free blacks and runaway slaves.

The Middletown newspaper, *Constitution*, reported the week of March 5, 1862 that General Mansfield wrote an extensive letter to the commission formed to study the contraband issue. In it he stated his view that the contrabands should be paid for their services to the United States: "Now what are these negroes? Are they not free-men by this state of rebellion? By the act of secession, the confederate states have voluntarily broken the constitution and laws of the Union, and have taken up arms against



that constitution and those laws, and the United States are thereby absolved from the enforcement of the fugitive slave law, even if so absurd a claim were put forth. If this statement be true, they are entitled as laborers, to all the wages they can earn, and to go where they please, and I would recommend that all their earnings be paid to them while in the United States employ, and that all officers and others who employ them in this department be required to pay them a just compensation, and that they be allowed to improve their condition if opportunity should admit."

While serving in the Department of Virginia, General Mansfield also participated in the battle of the ironclads, the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Virginia* (formerly known as the *USS Merrimack*), from the shore batteries on March 9, 1862. The Society possesses a piece of the *Merrimack*, which is on display in our current exhibit, *Within These Walls: One House, One Family, Two Centuries*. 



Membership News

We welcome new members John Banks, Elizabeth Bazazi, Anne C. Farrow, Guilmartin, DiPiro and Sokolowski, LLC, Susan Jones & Janet Kalas, Steven Kovach, John D. Reisch, Michael Tanasi, Nancy Thurrott, and Katie Tietjen. New members with fresh ideas are the lifeblood of any organization, so please encourage your friends and neighbors to join us in helping to keep history alive in Middletown.. 

Recent Acquisitions

The Society possesses a rich collection of artifacts and manuscripts relative to the history of Middletown. Researchers scour our manuscripts for clues of life here in the Colonial and Civil War eras and are also beginning to read our collections of war correspondence from both World Wars; and our changing exhibits display the artifacts of bygone eras. We are pleased to receive the donations of people eager to preserve the past so that it can illuminate the future. Highlights of the new acquisitions include the following items:

- Three volumes of town votes and proprietor records, 1652-1842 and one volume of early militia records donated by Town Clerk Sandra Russo-Driska in memory of the late town clerk Anthony "Buddy" Sbona. These volumes complement our early selectmen's records, justice records, apprenticeship records, and early bills to the town. Researchers will now be able to find all these colonial records in one place.
- Chafee Family Collection, including the notes of Bertha Chafee while a student nurse at Connecticut Hospital for the Insane (now CT Valley Hospital) in 1916, items from the Chafee Hotel on Court Street, World War I and World War II memorabilia including war insurance and ration books and stamps. Some of these items are already on display in our World War II exhibit. Donated by Charles and Sharon Chafee.

The Society is most grateful to the many generous people who have donated their precious treasures.

- Schilke Family Collection, including clothing and household items from the early and mid-twentieth century, donated by Beth Schilke Kilian.
- Richard Dickerson Tool Collection, additions to this collection include Warner & Noble hammers and ball peen, donated by Richard and Suzanne Dickerson.
- Records and Charter of the Westfield Grange, donated by Phyllis Redford.
- First Edition of the Woodrow Wilson High School newspaper, The Margray, 1934, a feedbag from Meech & Stoddard, and many pictures of the 1936 flood and 1938 hurricane, donated by Biff and Jean Shaw.
- Blueprints of the Main Gate at Indian Hill Cemetery, donated by David Cruthers.
- Russell Manufacturing Collection, additions to this collection include copper printer's label making blocks from the 1930's and 1970's, donated by G. John Pelchuck III.
- Middlesex Theater movie programs from 1924, donated by Florence Giuliano.
- Pewter teapot, early twentieth century, manufactured by the Middletown Silver Co. donated by Edith Dubey

More pictures of members at the beautiful Governor's Residence... *wish you were there!*



Governor Malloy mingling with guests



Foyer of Residence, scene of happy guests

The Society's Budget Crisis and How We Are Meeting It

The Middlesex County Historical Society is a privately-funded, non-profit organization. We do not receive ongoing financial support from municipal, state, or federal government sources. For most of our 111-year history, the Society has been fully supported by the generosity of our members and patrons. Until recently, the income from the Society's investments and the modest annual revenue from memberships, gift shop sales, and fundraising events were enough to cover the expenses of maintaining the Mansfield House and managing the Society.

In the mid-2000's, the Board decided to become a more visible, active part of the Middletown community. Donna Baron, who had a great deal of experience in historical site management, was hired to be Executive Director. Donna and the Board created new exhibits and programs to celebrate Middletown's history, including an award-winning exhibit on Middletown and the Civil War. The Society was awarded a matching grant to install an HVAC system to replace one aged and one non-functioning furnace in the Mansfield House, and our collections of documents and artifacts are now housed in conditions that promote their preservation. Debby Shapiro took over as Executive Director in 2009, and she has been spectacularly successful in promoting the Society and our activities. We are fortunate to have as Executive Director someone with Debby's profound knowledge of local history and her infectious enthusiasm for it.

However, as the Society's activity has increased so has its expenses. This was not a problem until the global economic downturn a few years ago. Our investments were severely affected by the downturn, and lost about a third of their value in 2009. In response, Debby Shapiro and the Board carefully reviewed the budget and were successful in reducing many operating costs for insurance, utilities and office expenses. We continue to review all expenses and reduce them when possible. However, these reductions have not closed the gap between the Society's income and its expenses.

This gap is now about \$45,000 annually. Unless we take significant measures to close the gap, the Society may have to close its doors. If no changes are made, by 2017 the Society will no longer be able to maintain the Mansfield House and the extensive collections housed there, or create exhibits and programs that celebrate the rich history of Middletown.

Debby, myself and the rest of the Board are determined to prevent this from happening. Over the past several months

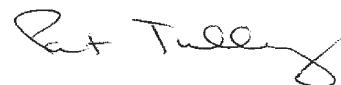
the Board has developed an aggressive, multi-year plan to increase our revenue and close this gap. The budget for the coming year includes a number of ambitious revenue targets:

	Income budgeted last year	Income budgeted this year
Donations	\$2,500.00	\$13,500.00
Fundraisers (net)	\$2,500.00	\$8,500.00
Gift shop	\$1,500.00	\$5,700.00
Memberships	\$6,000.00	\$8,000.00
Research fees	\$1,000.00	\$2,500.00
Events (net)	\$1,300.00	\$4,500.00
Newsletter ads	-	\$1,000.00
House rental (net)	-	\$10,000.00
Total revenue expectation	\$14,800.00	\$53,700.00

The Society's goals this year are designed to help meet these targets. They include:

- Increasing research and other fees,
- Selling ads for the newsletter and the website,
- Renting the Mansfield House and gardens to groups and individuals for events,
- Expanding the sale of gifts and souvenirs at the Mansfield House (with satellite sales elsewhere in Middletown),
- Converting the capital campaign to a fundraising campaign to meet current operating expenses,
- Establishing a policy for donating to the Society in exchange for naming rights for exhibit and research spaces,
- Selling a few, selected items—those without a connection to Middlesex County history—with the proceeds to be added to a collections account. (The income from the collections account will be used only to preserve and provide access to the Society's collections.)
- Cultivating potential donors, and encouraging legacy gifts to the Society,
- Holding a silent auction and other events to raise money, in addition to the very successful annual car show and the garden luncheon.

Our revenue targets are very ambitious, and they will not be easy to meet. But these targets and other measures will put the Society on a path to financial sustainability while continuing to improve access to our collections, exhibits, and activities. We welcome your ideas and suggestions about how the Society can ensure our financial sustainability for another 111 years—and beyond! 



Patricia Tully, President of the Board,
Middlesex County Historical Society

