



DEANE HOUSE

WEBB HOUSE

STEVENS HOUSE

NSCDA-CT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

SUMMER 2009

Message from the President

Torrey Cooke

The months have passed quickly with much activity within the Board of Managers, as well as with Area Gatherings, and Nationally, since I became President.

There was a record number of Dames at our Annual Meeting on May 20th at the Webb Barn, as reported by Nonnie Redway, our Social Committee Chair.

On June 8th it was time to welcome in the New and thank the former Board Members, followed by lunch with the museum staff. The newly elected Board members will be assets to our organization, as were those who served previously on the board.

The Connecticut Society was well represented in April when we met in Baltimore. Thanks to Dames Jestin, Caulfield, Parkinson, and Reynolds for attending. My sister, Pinkie Roe, from the Delaware Society and I had the honor of carrying the flags at the opening and closing ceremonies.

The Glebe House “Areas Gathering” was very well attended, and word got around of the fun we had afterwards at the luncheon at Highfield Club. Thanks to Faith Warner for her hospitality and history of place and especially for telling us about Theodate Pope Riddle.



Pinkie Roe and Torrey Cooke at the meeting in Baltimore.

Continued on page 3

Message from the Director

Charles T. Lyle

I am pleased to report that the museum is having another busy and productive year. We have recently sponsored several well received programs and continue to make steady progress on improving the appearance and interpretation of the historic houses.

On Memorial Day Weekend, May 23-24, we held a Revolutionary War Encampment on museum land just south of the Silas Deane House. The event was underwritten by The Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati and featured re-enactors from the Fifth Connecticut Regiment. We estimate that over 1000 people visited the Encampment on Saturday and Sunday, including 327 visitors to the Museum. The members of The Fifth Connecticut were gratified by the response, and we hope to hold the event on an annual basis to mark the anniversary of Washington’s historic visit.

We also hosted over 100 guests at a reception on Saturday evening. A new 4-foot by 6-foot exhibit panel on the meeting of Washington and French General Rochambeau in May 1781 was unveiled during an official ceremony held in the courtyard. The panel, also underwritten by the Society of the Cincinnati, is currently on view in the recently renovated entrance area in the Webb House annex and will eventually be moved to the second floor hallway outside the Washington bedchamber.

After an extremely hectic spring with school tours almost every morning, Education Coordinator Tari-Lynn Joyce and the museum educators put together a very well received Summer Sampler Series from July 13 to 17. Between eleven and seventeen children

Continued on page 4

Areas Outing Planned

Mary Russell, Chair, Areas Committee



Come join us for a beautiful day at the Hill-Stead Museum on Sept. 23 2009! The fall all-areas activities this year will begin with a tour of the Hill-Stead Museum, originally the home of Theodate Pope Riddle, located in Farmington Connecticut. The tour will be followed by drinks in the garden and lunch at the Town and County Club, of which Theodate was a member.

Hill-Stead is the beautiful neo-classical mansion designed by Theodate Pope Riddle for her family. Theodate did most of the architectural design in 1898, and by 1901, the Hill-Stead was established. She worked with Edgerton Swartout, a junior architect at McKim, Mead and White, and she was influenced by the Colonial Revival Movement.

The interior of the Hill-Stead has a wonderful collection of French Impressionist paintings, including works by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet, and Mary Cassatt. The house also contains period furniture, textiles, prints and decorative arts all on display.

In the archives there are many interesting papers. Since Theodate and her mother were Colonial Dames, their Colonial Dames papers will be taken out of the archives and put on display for our viewing during the tour. Since many Dames have toured the Hill-Stead on numerous occasions, the tour will be abbreviated and have a new spin on it. The tour will concentrate on Theodate and her involvement with the Colonial Dames.

After the tour of the house we will meet on the veranda for refreshments and we will be able to visit the neo-classical sunken garden designed by Beatrix Farrand around 1920.

For lunch we will move on to the Town and County club, which Theodate helped to save from demolition, establishing it as a club and gathering place for women.

The Town and County club is housed in the Lyman family house which was built in 1895. It is a registered landmark and was designed by architects Hapgood and Hapgood. We are looking forward to this exciting day, themed around an important Colonial Dame.

Gunston Hall has a birthday

Gunston Hall is celebrating its 250th Anniversary this year over the Columbus Day weekend. Ellie Buchanan, our Regent and current Gunston Hall Collections Chairwoman, will attend the festivities and will then report to us, as the speaker at our Semi-annual meeting on October 21, 2008. Please make plans to attend!



Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, one of America's Founding Fathers and a respected friend of Jefferson, Washington and Madison, is now a National Historic Landmark, and is owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and administered by a Board of Regents appointed from The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America.

Curious about Gunston Hall and its history? Visit their website: www.gunstonhall.org

Message from the President *continued from page 1*

Mary Russell has suggested that to augment our knowledge of Theodate Riddle we might want to read, "Dearest of Geniuses" by Sandra L. Katz.

Guy Wolff, the well-known potter from Washington CT, was our guest on June 10th. His appearance was underwritten by the Beatrice Utley Lecture Fund. He gave a talk about the history of garden pots and vases and gave a demonstration of his art. He brought some pots from his studio, and we purchased several of his designs. I am also very pleased to announce that he intends to design one especially for our Webb-Deane-Stevens shop.



Photograph by Charles T. Lyle

Torrey Cooke introducing Guy Wolff

What a wonderful family trip we took June 29th, when my siblings and I were guests of The Mount Vernon Ladies Association! Our family donated art from our parent's estate to their collection. The evening included a candlelight tour of the entire mansion belonging to our first President of the United States. Cocktails were served in the upper garden, which abounds with flowers planted within boxwood hedges. Dinner followed on the veranda overlooking the serene Potomac River. A long table was beautifully decorated with roses, hydrangeas, and pink peonies down the center. Dinner consisted of vegetables, such as asparagus, red cabbage, squash, tomatoes grown in the gardens, beef and salmon, and dessert was a strawberry/rhubarb/raspberry crisp. It was a memorable evening! I hope that when you visit the new exhibit, "George Washington & His Generals," at Mount Vernon, you take note of the picture by Thomas Prichard Rossiter, as well as one by Gunther-Hartwick of Newburg, NY.

I look forward to seeing you at the Semi-Annual Meeting in October!

Membership Re-examined and Re-evaluated

Mary Russell, Areas Chair

The Membership Committee met on July 22 at Charbra Jestin's house. In attendance were Marian Browning, Sally Kernan, Nancy MacColl and Mary Russell. The focus of the Membership meeting was the application process and how to ease the requirements and streamline the application process. Charbra started the meeting by demonstrating how to go on to National's website to access the Ancestor Eligibility Lists and application forms for admission to the Colonial Dames. Sally Kernan brought with her printouts of the Eligibility Lists by state. Nancy MacColl gave a comprehensive talk explaining the duties of the registrar and detailing the sequence of procedures that a candidate must fulfill to become a member of the Colonial Dames.

The Membership Committee will propose that the Connecticut Eligibility List be compared to

Eligibility Lists of other states and, if less stringent rules are found in other states, consider adopting them. The goal of the Committee is to ease some of Connecticut's stricter regulations so we can increase membership.

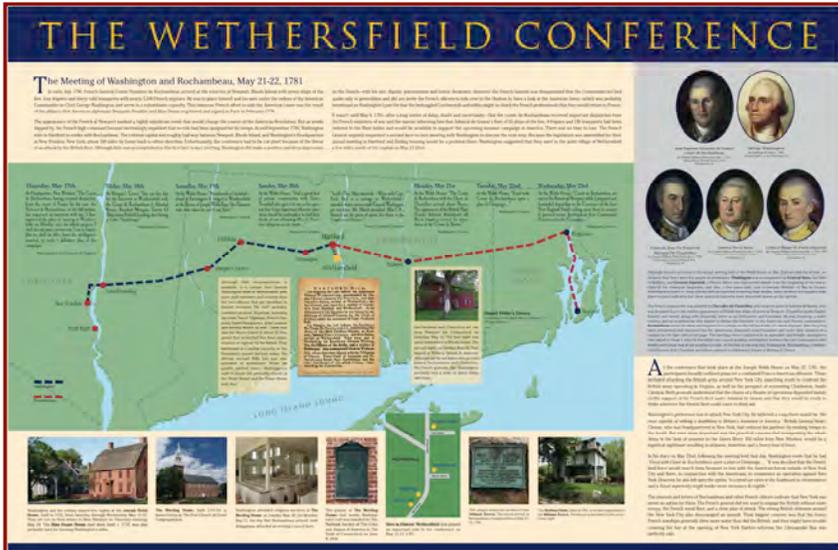
The Membership Committee also suggests that we have more planned as well as spontaneous activities noting that Morrie Killian arranged a fun spontaneous activity this summer. In July Morrie arranged a pool party and cookout with some Dames and their young children at Mary Russell's house.

The Membership and the Areas Committees would love to hear any suggestions from our members about possible entertaining ideas and interesting activities as well as ideas about streamlining the admissions process for membership in the Colonial Dames in the State of Connecticut.

Message from the Director *continued from page 1*

were registered each day for the week of fun activities, including a day of play with period games and toys, painting watercolors of the garden and learning how seeds grow; weaving on home-made looms made of straws, writing with quill pins, decoding secret messages, and learning how to march like a Continental soldier.

In the Museum Calendar, included elsewhere in this newsletter, there is an ambitious listing of upcoming Fall and Winter events and programs. In addition to continuing our popular Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas events, we have scheduled some new programs and special tours.



The Museum has also embarked on several curatorial projects that relate to our efforts to receive re-accreditation from the American Association of Museums. Kristen Wand started as our new part-time Curatorial Assistant in June. Kristen is working at the Museum one day a week and is also employed by the Stanley-Whitman House in Farmington. She is a graduate of the Winterthur program at the University of Delaware and has a BA in History, *summa cum laude*, from Arizona State University. She worked previously as a Curatorial Assistant in the decorative arts at Bayou Bend in Houston. She has extensive experience in museum

The new 4' x 6' exhibition panel on Washington's meeting with Rochambeau was underwritten by The Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati

cataloguing and will be working to update our accession records and begin the process of converting all of our curatorial records, which date back to 1918, to Past Perfect. This is part of a nation-wide effort initiated at the Dumbarton House to put all NSCDA records in the same database.

We have also been pleased to have Carolyn Barry as our Carlton Summer Intern. Carolyn graduated from the University of Connecticut in May 2009 and is going to graduate school in Historic Preservation and Museum Studies at the University of Delaware. She has updated the accession records in all of the houses and put them into well organized room books for reference by the guides fielding questions from visitors. Her project also brings our museum inventory up-to-date.

We are currently in the process of completing the final bidding documents and getting governmental approvals for the restoration of the Washington Bedchamber and the exterior restoration and painting of the Webb House. These are both very important projects funded by Save American Treasures and a \$53,000 matching grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism Historic Preservation Fund. I will keep you updated as these projects move forward.

Finally, Susan Friedlander, a former curator of Old Sturbridge Village and a wallpaper expert, helped us to identify appropriate period wallpapers for the Stevens House. By the early 1800s, factories transformed home interiors in America through the availability of affordable household decorations such as curtains, carpets and wallpapers. By the 1820s, the Stevens family certainly would have wallpapered their rooms in the latest fashion rather than have the present stark, whitewashed walls. Although no evidence survives of the original wallpapers used, several of the patterns recommended were produced by Janes & Bolles, a Hartford firm which operated from 1822-1827, and seem to be just right. We have hung samples of the recommended papers throughout the house and look forward to your input when we meet in the Fall. We currently do not have funding for this project and hope to raise the money privately.

Donors to the NSCDA-CT

As of August 15, 2009 the following generous donors have made extra gifts to the NSCDA-CT when sending in their dues. The extra funds are very much appreciated.

Mrs. Charles Edgar Aysseh	Ms. M. L. Alexandra Escher	Miss Katherine B. Rohrbach
Mrs. Frederick Barclay	Mrs. Denis Brian Flynn	Mrs. Philip Rowley
Mrs. Dirck Barhydt	Mrs. Martin B. Gentry, Jr.	Mrs. William H. Russell
Mrs. Rollin H. Bates	Mrs. J. Bartley Given III	Mrs. Philip C. Scheide
Mrs. Sally Bill	Mrs. Tracy H. Griswold	Mrs. Charles N. Schenck III
Mrs. Jackson Bird	Mrs. Lacy B. Herrmann	Mrs. Brant Smith
Mrs. Stanford H. Brainerd	Mrs. Robert A. Hicks	Mrs. John W. Soper
Mrs. William Buchanan, Jr.	Mrs. Seth Holcombe	Ms. Karen Stetler
Mrs. Stanton L. Catlin	Mrs. Loftus H. D. Jestin	Mrs. Elizabeth Troy Stromberg
Mrs. William Chittenden, Jr.	Ms. Caroline Saunders Keggi	Mrs. Calvert Thomas
Mrs. Elias Clark	Mrs. Kristaps Juris Keggi	Mrs. James H. Torrey
Mrs. Stuart H. Clement, Jr.	Mrs. Victor H. King	Mrs. David T. Totman
Mrs. David R. Coffin	Mrs. F. David Lapham	Mrs. Richard H. Troy
Mrs. J. Noyes Crary	Mrs. A. Gordon Peterkin III	Mrs. Josiah G. Venter
Mrs. P. Anthony Cruger	Mrs. Robert L. Peterson	Miss Helen G. Waterman
Ms. Catherine V. Cruger	Mrs. Philip A. G. Ratliff	Miss Eleanor Pratt West
Mrs. Leete Doty	Mrs. Albert S. Redway, Jr.	Mrs. Philip Henry Wootton, Jr.
Mrs. Harold Edwards	Mrs. John F. Reynolds III	Mrs. Frederick D. Zonino

A New Project for Museum Grounds

The Webb House Garden is so beautiful! It is such an inspiration to all who come to the Museum and to those from the community of Wethersfield who come for their weekly walk on the grounds. The “Angels” who maintain this fine Colonial Revival Garden are members of several local garden clubs, the Wethersfield Community or are Colonial Dames from around the state. They have so inspired the Connecticut Society Grounds Committee that it has decided to use the “Back 40” (several-acre woodlot) for a Nature Trail. Its purpose is to better carry out the mission of the Connecticut Society – preservation, interpretation, presentation of our nation’s Colonial and Revolutionary history through the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum and the proposed Nature Trail. This small acreage or woodlot is being studied thoroughly – getting rid of poison ivy, treacherous vines, Japanese Knotweed and bittersweet, with the hope of being ready to say “Hello” to all its friends, neighbors, volunteers and community helpers, etc. in the spring of 2010. Volunteers are needed in volume right now – trail makers, schoolteachers, scoutmasters, nature lovers, wildflower addicts, butterfly chasers, native seed researchers – and those who sit and talk and dream. For more information please call: Mrs. Agnew Talcott (Shirley) 860-434-5446, Co-chair of the Grounds Committee.

Semi Annual Meeting Wednesday, October 21st

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the NSCDA-CT Semi-Annual Meeting on Wednesday, October 21st in the Webb Barn. Notices will be going out shortly but, in the meanwhile, plan to be there. Ellie Buchanan will be updating us on the birthday celebrations for Gunston Hall held over the Columbus Day weekend in Virginia.

RECENT PROGRAMS HELD AT THE MUSEUM



Revolutionary campsite south of Deane House on May 23-24



Soldiers from the 5th Connecticut Regiment at Deane House



Reenactor teaches children to march in formation



Bell Ringers at the Encampment



Period toys were available to try out at The Summer Sampler, July 13-17



Staff members Tari-Lynn Joyce and Dick Agne teach children about seeds.



Participants paint watercolors of the Garden on the Webb House

All photographs on this page by Charles T. Lyle

WEBB-DEANE-STEVENSON MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October	
Saturdays 10, 17, 24, 31 (10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.)	Special tours of the Buttolph-Williams House and the Ancient Burying Ground focusing on Witchcraft in Wethersfield.
Saturday, October 17 (6:00-9:30 p.m.)	“Spirits of Old Wethersfield” Candlelight tours of the three houses with costumed staff members playing characters from the past. Includes Silas Deane planning a party with wife Elizabeth and their housekeeper; several of the women in Wallace Nutting’s photographs coming to life in the Yorktown Parlor; and a somber yet intriguing look at medicine, illness, funerals and mourning practices at the early 19 th century Stevens House.
November	
November 7-29 weekends only (Saturdays 10-4 p.m.; Sundays 1-4 p.m.)	“Thanksgiving at the Silas Deane House.” Special exhibit set up in the Deane House.
November 27-29 (Friday, Saturday 10-4 p.m.; Sunday 1-4 p.m.)	Open for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend for tours and shopping.
December	
Early December (date to be announced), 5:30 p.m. wine reception; 6:30 p.m. lecture at The Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth St. at Asylum Ave, Hartford, CT	Co-sponsored lecture by Joel Richard Paul, author of a new book (to be published in October 2009) on Silas Deane: <i><u>Unlikely Allies: How a Merchant, a Playwright and a Spy Saved the American Revolution</u></i>
December 1-11	Webb House open for holiday shopping. The Museum is closed for regular tours while we decorate.
Saturday, December 5, 10-12 p.m.	Workshop on making cone decorations in the Ed Room.
Friday, December 11, 5-8 p.m.	Opening Preview Party with the three houses decorated for the holidays. Enjoy good food and drink, period decorations, live music and abundant holiday cheer.
Sat., December 12 through Sun., January 3 (except Christmas and New Years Day)	“Three Centuries of Holiday Décor, Hospitality and Tradition.” Theme tours of the three houses where guides discuss the history of Christmas and New Year’s traditions.
January	
January 4-March 31, 2010	Museum closed to the public for walk-in tours.
Monday, January 18, 2010	African-American tours in honor of Martin Luther King Day.
February	
Wednesday, February 3, 10, 17, 24 (10:00-10:45 a.m.)	“Little Historians.” A 45-minute program for children ages 2-4.
February 20-21 & 27-28, 2010 Saturdays 10-4, Sundays 1-4	Black History Month African-American tours.
March	
Wednesdays March 3, 10, 17 & 24 (10:00-10:45 a.m.)	“Little Historians.” A 45-minute program for children ages 2-4.
Saturday March 13 & 20 (10-4 p.m.)	Women’s History Month: Craft Workshop & Tours.

NSCDA-CT FALL CALENDAR

September	
Monday, September 14	Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m. Board of Managers Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
Monday, September 21	Development Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m. Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 23	Areas Outing to Hill-Stead Museum
October	
Monday, October 5	Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m. Board of Managers Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday, October 21	SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING, 11:00 a.m.
November	
Monday, November 9	Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m. Board of Managers Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
Monday, November 16	Development Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m. Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m.
December	
Monday, December 14	Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m. Board of Managers Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Holiday Lunch Party for Board & Staff, 12:00 noon



Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum
211 Main Street
Wethersfield, CT 06109