

The

Bethel Lark

With Love for Our Friends in Sandy Hook

Vol. 1

Winter 2012 - Bethel, CT

Issue 4

A Heavily Haunted Historical Halloween Weekend

Two Exciting Events Fill the Holiday With Plenty of Historical Storytelling and Spooky Fun

One could spend pages more than we have here, discussing the allure of the small New England town come Halloween-time - the penchant for ghost stories that have dotted the countryside as prevalent as red barns and stonewalls, crumbling through generations of paint and climber, and sometimes inextricably entwined with one another (for there's nothing like a stone wall that cannot be passed by some white-clad spirit of the garden, longing and wailing for some effect or person which has long ago left the area, leaving behind such reverberations of memory and loss).

Bethel, of course, properly nestled in a hillside of cemeteries and Victorian houses, celebrates this dance with the past in fine form, with both a Ghost Tour and a Children's Victorian Halloween Party.

On Friday October 25th, nearly forty brave adventurers gathered at the Second Meeting House on Main Street, awaiting the arrival of storyteller Martha Bishop and her raven, Rafe. For those readers who have never met Rafe, why he is the star of Rafe's Grand Adventure (of which you could find at the appropriately named Bethel house of literature, Byrd's Books) a story penned by the tour guide herself. Rafe is "a raven whose curiosity leads him to discover great beauty and great danger. He discovers the powers within himself and how he deals with both."

The group headed down Main Street, and over to P.T. Barnum Square and onto Greenwood Avenue. Each inch one wondered who and what might jump out from around a corner, from behind a wall, or call down from a balcony or window up above. To be set on standing-hair's end, is what a ghost tour ought to be, yes? Thus, along the way, tales tolled of ghosts and visions, visionaries and strange sounds, and of sightings that were passed down from one generation to another.

At one stop, Darryl Soifersmith, who owns Take Time, perched upon the stoop, as if guarding an entranceway one might not want to enter on this rippling night (or maybe it was he, keeping whatever was inside, at bay so as to not bother the visitors who had come to listen and wonder and watch for any gossamer threads that might flow from within) spun those illuminated threads into a yarn about a ghost who is renowned to have haunted his very shop - transporting all sorts of packages and containers from the storage area in the back into pleasantly attuned stacks in the storefront as if preparing the day for the customers at hand. He revealed that this peek-behind-the-curtain came through the whisperings and investigations of



Storyteller Martha Bishop leads a Ghost Tour and regales a warmed-by-ghostlight group of brave souls with the haunted history of downtown Bethel. Are there any ghosts out there?

a local town medium who also revealed just why she believed that this spirit was so restless about the crates and shipments in the shop...but of course, this is a tale for which you ought wait until the next Ghost Tour to hear its conclusion.

Moving through the town, our adventurers also heard how the Municipal Center, built in 1939 (for as well we know that the older a building gets, while not a requisite for a locale being filled with spirits and spooks, does allow more oddities and inquiries to occur and thus with a more storied history it seems only fair and natural that there might be more of a hallowed history, yes?)...

In hushed whisper (as opposed to the other kind which is a screaming whisper) we heard about a sound, a bounce, bounce, bounce...bouncing... ball bouncing off the walls of a room, from corner to corner, yet that very same room was dark, the door locked, and not a person could be found. One wonders if a Bethel High School basketball team of yore, whose photos one could imagine lining the walls in a scene reminiscent of the film Dead Poets Society, have chosen to reconvene in the gymnasium, so as to keep running drills and wait for the spectral team from nearby Danbury to hop a horse and carriage over for a pickup game just like old times. One would have to wonder then, what

the result would be if said game took place at the same hour as the annual library book sale...

Speaking of, it seems even the silence of the Bethel Library, does not get off, undisturbed, for, "Mr. Seelye is gone but he stays in the library. The librarians feel that he takes the elevator up and down."

While the stories are enough to fill an entire tome, what fun would that be over taking the tour next year? Suffice to say the night ended with hot cider and donuts in the some-say haunted very same Second Meeting House at which the night began. However, dear Reader, we'll leave you with one more image painted by words, and then as you turn the page, that very same image, as an image, in a lucky state of affairs that a photographer was able (as the parishioners at the church of the supernatural headed toward the old Opera House, listening to stories and previously not exactly paying attention to the few others who were out and about on this late-October evening) to capture a trio of apparitions walking in silence, apparently out to make the acquaintance of those who are enamored of such crossings, guided by little but the flicker of a lantern and the ringing of some type of old Tibetan bell. We are told that the patrons of Caraluzzi's were also met with a visitation by the Lady of the Lantern...

cont. Page 3

The Bethel Lark

is published by

The Bethel Historical Society
40 Main St Bethel CT 06801
info@bethelhistoricalsociety.com
facebook.com/bethelhistoricalsociety

Executive Board

Patricia A. Rist.....President
Lillian Emmons.....1st Vice President
Mary Ferri.....2nd Vice President
Jeffrey Pagelson.....Treasurer
Molly Rollison.....Secretary

Board of Directors

Gary Boughton....Krista Fiorini
Kitty Grant....Gerhard Herrmann
Marc Moorash....David L. Rist
Rob Sauber

Past President

Mary Allen Gaffney



Town Historian

Patrick T. Wild

Founded in the 1950's

The Bethel Historical Society is an independent, non-profit organization made up of a group of people dedicated to preserving Bethel's history through acquisitions and conservation of property, artifacts and stories.

The Society is dedicated to the education of the people of Bethel and surrounding communities.

Monthly programs are presented on varied historical subjects. Also offered are programs geared toward the education of children such as monthly historical craft classes, Walking Tours of Bethel and a Child's Victorian Christmas Tea.



The Bethel Lark

Text Editor.....Marc Moorash
Photo Editor.....Ava Dawn Heydt
Design by.....Seraphemera Books
(www.seraphemera.org)

The Bethel Lark is always looking for contributions on historical tales and travels within the sphere of Bethel CT and her surrounds.

Printed by The R.E. Lawlor Printing Co.
203-748-4144 http://www.relawlor.net

The President's Perspective



Dear Members and Future Members,

By the time you receive this Newsletter, we are into 2013 and we are ready for another year of programs for adults and children at the Historical Society.

back to 1842 will always be an ongoing project.

We are a busy organization and are very proud of what we have accomplished. It is important that we continue forward and keep the Historical Society an essential part of our community. If you feel you have information to share with Bethel or simply wish to work with our group, in any capacity, we would welcome you. Again, just contact us.

Please continue to go to our website to review our upcoming programs such as Laura Ingalls Wilder, Taste of History, our Annual Antique Appraisal Day, Railroading Through Bethel, a Cemetery Tour, Researching Your Old House, Colonial Kids Camp, a Quilt Show, Halloween Ghost Tour, and much more.

New and revised Membership Renewals will arrive to you shortly. We need the gift of your membership dues and the pleasure of your company at our events. Your financial support will help the Historical Society continue being a vibrant organization. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your membership is tax deductible as allowed.

Now, we need your help. Are you a doll collector or know someone who is? The Historical Society would like to have a presentation on dolls and doll collecting. Dolls from all periods of time are welcome. Please contact us at bethelhistoricalsociety.com with any information you may have.

Of particular note is our Newsletter now has sponsors and we want to thank these businesses for believing in what we do and wanting to support us in getting historical information out to Bethel and the surrounding communities. A very special thank you goes out to them and a reminder that it is important that we support the businesses that support Bethel.

Building repair activities, in 2012, included carpentry work and painting in the two main floor rooms along with badly needed outside copper work and a fresh coat of paint for the Meeting House. Of course, maintaining a building dating

Until next time,
Patricia Rist

You'll have noticed that the cover of this volume of The Bethel Lark sees our gentle mascots carrying a banner - with a message to our dear friends and neighbors in Sandy Hook. There are an uncountable number of words that can be offered as solace and healing, and to all of these we add our voice to the chorus. As a Historical Society our job is to help remember, so that future generations learn, and learn from the progress and mistakes, of the past. For us, to put a memory into print (not that these times will ever be forgotten) is the best way to be certain those who come after us, remember and feel these days.



McGuire Brothers Painters give the Second Meeting House a new coat of bright shine.



One doesn't just simply scale the walls of such a building...one brings in the lift!

The Spirits Were Out and About on Main Street...

Their Tales of Haunting and Visitation Were Being Told All Along Greenwood Avenue



The Lady of the Lantern was a hithertofore only rumored-to-be-haunting apparition around the streets and alleyways of Bethel. On this night, rumor became much more real...

Switch then, to the Halloween event-the-second (while certainly nothing would have prevented the glorious youth of the town for heading out on the Ghost Tour and, for that matter, a few did) and come Sunday October 27th, a group of costumed revelers, looking to get a second round beyond the annual trick or treating crowds, spent an afternoon exploring all sorts of orange and black history and reveling as their great-great-great ghost friends would have once done.

Dressed as cats, bats, and in top hats, as princesses, clowns and pumpkins, too, the children danced and sugared (but of course, for this is the season to be candy boo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo - though not in the crying sense but in the haunting spooky sense) their way through an afternoon of pin the tail on the cat, leaping for powdered donuts which, we are told, while not only an opposite to the ever popular bobbing for apples (and on this day these fine youngins learned it is far more difficult than one would imagine and nearly impossible to get

their chompers on a Macintosh without getting a nose full of water - but let us be thankful that even with plates full of candy and delights, there was still an interest in a red delish!) was an ever so popular endeavor of the Victorian age.

Further, the afternoon ended with a rollicking stick swinging, pumpkin smashing, pinata, which ended with a rainbow of treats flung across the room. Although, it must be said, they are still making these treasure chests of highest craftsmanship for regardless of how they tried, the pumpkin would not yield, and only, after the helpful hands of some nearby adults, did the crepe paper (and heavy-gauge cardboard) gourd agree to relinquish its insides. And while this writer doth prefer his pumpkin seeds roasted and salted over a nearby fire, whose to say that candy is not, indeed, more dandy?

article by Marc Moorash
photos by Paula Antolini & Robert Sauber



Trick or treat or craft? Come on inside and make a spooky ornament for your upcoming Christmas tree!



Even an angel is willing to swing the stick, knowing that inside of that pumpkin is something sweet.



They speak of a cat o' nine tails, but by the end of the day, this one had twenty.

Tracking the Story from One Hundred Years Away

When a Box is Uncovered in the Historical Society Archive, How is the Story Found?

At first glance, the randomness of the items was overlooked and thought of as just that - randomness - because of the newspapers which unfolded. There, in our hands, one of the rarest of the rare - copies of The Bethel Press from 1877 (see page seven for a glimpse of this beauty).

For whatever reason, The Bethel Press (one of the many newspapers of yester and yore that was published here in our beloved city - such as John Rodemeyer's aptly named Yellow Spasm which was printed in the 1880s on, fittingly, yellow paper) did not seem to survive outside of a partial run that has since been turned to microfilm and resides in the state collection and a small number of bound copies that reside with our neighbors in Danbury. Yet, one holds hope that somewhere, maybe in your attic, tied together with some old garden twine, is every copy of The Bethel Press ever printed. But, this digresses.

After examining the fine sample, in great condition even having been folded into sixths for who-knows-how-long, the focus turned to the rest of the items in the box...and this is where the fun and history and mystery begins. For, after taking a white-gloved sift through all of the items, not only did the randomness of various items seem nearly impossible to be random, we realized that the owner left us a few clues as to why and wherefore.

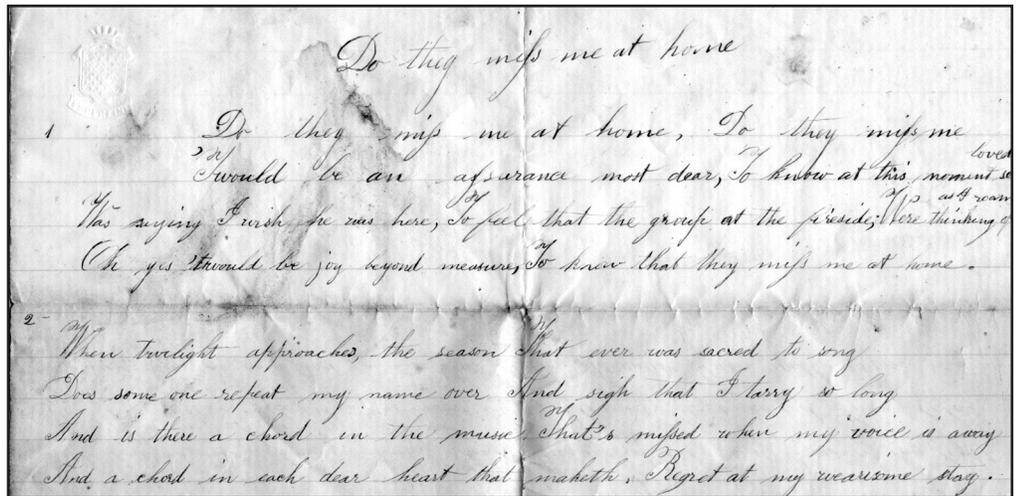
You see, not every item that gets passed down through history has its lineage and provenance easily at hand. While each of us says we'll sit and write on the back of the photo, the names and important information of each and every relative so that Aunt Clara is not mistakenly referred to as Aunt Lara, and Uncle Jack is easily discerned from Great Uncle Jack and First Cousin Jack and his eight brothers whose names each began with a "J", the truth is...this rarely occurs. Oh the modern age in which one can just use the computer to draw a square around the face, type a name, and have it recognize each photo that has that very same person!

Further into the box, one realizes that there are actually two copies of the Bethel Press from April 7, 1877 (in addition to a copy of the same from October 23, 1874, and a few pages of The (Danbury) Evening-News from September 28, 1893). As we all know, two copies of the same paper...means something was being saved.

Sure enough, in one of the two copies, a line is drawn to highlight an obituary for one Mrs. Abbie Beach, with a mention of her father...one Mr. William McDowell.

How interesting then, that there is a handwritten set of lyrics, signed at the bottom with the very same last name (see the image to the right).

Can we make the connection, then, that this collection was a keepsake box for somebody in the family? A mother? A sister? Maybe, or would they, too, have been mentioned in the obituary? Or, was the writing of the day want to leave out the women and mention only then men? Was it (unfortunately) common to refer to the family



We take for granted the ability to copy pre-typed lyrics off of the internet, but hand writing them is a lost art. But what about this song touched so close to home?

home as "the residence of her father"? Herein sits one of the difficulties of piecing together the long lost - sometimes our modern read of text misses the colloquial and cultural text of the day...and we go astray from the truth.

To this end, one immediately would think, with a name signed at the bottom, maybe this person wrote the poem (see above photo). The box is full of other poems, cut out of newspapers, often without names attached - and one starts to dream of the large finds, the important finds...was this person a local poet? Alas, however, a quick search shows us that "Do They Miss Me at Home" is (so sayeth the modern encyclopedia of Wiki) "an 1852 song composed by Sidney Martin Grannis with lyrics by Caroline Atherton Mason. It enjoyed great popularity upon its publication, and was popular among soldiers during the Civil War."

What, then, of the other handwritten piece, folded neatly into an envelope, penned over so carefully on embossed stationery, entitled "Somebody's Waiting For Me"? A quick search shows no reference to the piece, but certainly, with

all of the other poems at hand, this must have been culled from something of the time.

Of course, other questions remain. What is the connection to the 1893 paper, again an obituary outlined, this time for an eighteen year old named Willie Trowbridge? Why does one sign a handwritten copy of a popular lyric of the day? Can we find reference to "Somebody's Waiting For Me" just as we did for "Do They Miss Me at Home"? All of these questions do have answers...and they might even be found. But for now, we'll simply enjoy the pieces that have revealed themselves, for sometimes, a little mystery is needed to inspire.

The next step will be to search the records for other references to the McDowell family, see who might have been a part of the extended tree, and determine whose box of cherished and important traveled through enough hands to eventually land and be protected in our collection, and to be remembered long after the story has faded away to a flicker yet waiting to be set aflame, again.

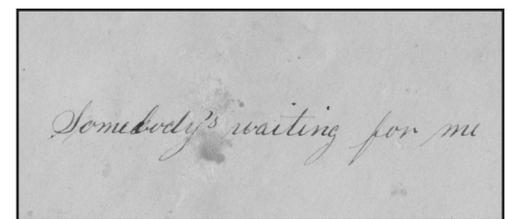
article and images by Marc Moorash

In Memoriam.

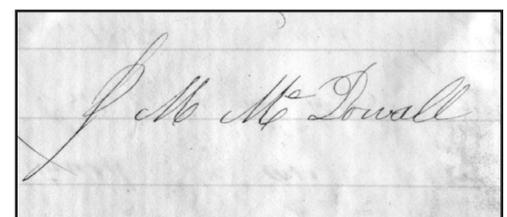
The remains of Mrs. Abbie Beach, who died on Monday, April 21, in Litchfield, were brought to Bethel, Wednesday evening, and taken to the residence of her father, Mr. William McDowell, on South street. The funeral services took place at 2 P. M., on Thursday, in the Methodist church, and was largely attended by the many friends of the deceased lady, and those of the family. Rev. Albert Chapman officiated, and delivered an impressive sermon. Mrs. Beach was married to Mr. Elias J. Beach, July 4th, 1875, and was at that time in the best of health, and bid fair to live and enjoy a long life. Mr. Beach removed to his former home in Litchfield, and last summer Mrs. Beach's health began to fail, and her mother went to attend her. For nine long months she watched faithfully beside the sick-bed of her daughter, until death called her loved one away. The wasted form told to the tearful and sympathizing friends, in mute but eloquent

can Muse
can testi
The colle
only the r
seum, say
one of the
probably of
of the mo
ever with
the 'first
mammoth
Thorne, d
and singu
are the tw
'Yeppo,'
Australia
specimen
found by
This sing
study for
skeptics
mense pre
strange l
the curio
family, th
intelligen

This is the piece of the puzzle around which all of the vague answers might revolve.



Is this another set of lyrics that has been lost to time or was this an original poem?



Is this the pen and signature of the person whose keepsake box is in our hands?

Living in Miniature is More Detailed than Living Large

An Afternoon of Dolls and Their Houses but in Designs & Styles One Would Not Expect

In the mind's eye of the uninitiated, the dollhouse evokes memories of the 1950s, the two story, front of the house pulls away, and all of the rooms and furniture and staircases mix and match and move around and allow for the everyday life of our family-in-small. Yet, if you were curious enough to attend the Doll Houses in America: Historic Preservation in Miniature event, then you (like this writer who was utterly astounded and glorified) would have seen that the abode of the miniature has the potential to be, and is not so unlike, the habitat of the gods.

The day began with the Historical Society's Mary Ferri speaking about taking one of those craft pumpkins that pop up at art supply stores and carving it out into a shell that Peter Pumpkin Eater might have used and made instead a castle for his wife. This theme, of taking the everyday and turning it into a mini-home, went in all manner of imaginative directions.

From there, a number of miniature creators discussed that their dollhouses and room boxes (which is, exactly as it sounds - a construction that is just one given room rather than the entire house) bloomed from all sorts of avenues. Basement workshops full of all manner of tools, hand crafted buildings out of whatever supplies might be available. Marty Bishop, who led the afternoon's discussion with a number of her own creations, showed that an old wine barrel could be transformed into a home for tiny creatures.

Of course, again, for those of us (including this writer whose only crossing with a dollhouse as a child, was discovering his aunt's old wooden treasure while exploring the basement of his grandmother's home) whose time in front of the dollhouse is limited, we see these as toys. But here, in front of us, and in the afternoon's slideshow enlightened us to the history of dollhouses across the world that in some instances were more gilded and glamorous than any toy could ever become.

"They were off limits to children Not because of safety concerns for the child but for the dollhouse. They became trophy collections for the few matrons living in the cities of Holland, England and Germany...fully furnished they were worth the price of a modest full sized house," explained our narrator.

Thankfully however, that trend had gone by the wayside and in that regard after the presentation ended the numerous children (and by that we mean all of those youth and adult who were interested in getting their hands crafty) moved into a room prepared with all sorts of leaves and glues so as to make a miniature hosta plant for one's very own miniature creation. So, while they say an entire garden may start from just one plant, here was the opportunity to not only grow the shrubbery but also the entire house to go with it, in miniature, but full of more pizzazz and panache than one could ever imagine until seen in person.



This isn't the dollhouse you remember from your youth but a version that has detail even in the details, and care and color that a photograph or one hundred really can't explain.



A "Room Box" made by hand, and from scratch, by Susan Klein.



The process of making a hosta plant for your own dollhouse creation.



Detail of a Fairy Room as envisioned and crafted by Marty Bishop.



While not exactly a gingerbread house, this one certainly looked good enough to eat.

We'd Like to Take This Page to Thank Our Sponsors

Bethel Historical Society Looking For Individuals & Businesses to Help Support The Lark & More

It goes without saying that it takes a certain interest in the past to spend all of the days of the present making certain those tales live on into the future, but here at the Bethel Historical Society, that's exactly what we do.

Often there's an inquiry as to why - why is history, now long gone, worth preserving? There is the age old adage that "Those who do not learn from the past are destined to repeat it" that we all learn in school and spoken by somebody famous and wise from an age or two ago, but to really understand the draw, one has to go beyond such bumper sticker phrases (and definitely beyond the scope of the few columns that are laid out before these nimble fingers, here).

Suffice, though, that beyond important, the fact is (yes fact, not simply opinion) is that it is necessary.

Necessary to understand from which we came so as to not only understand who we are (for sometimes repetition is a worthwhile act and not so foreboding as it seems for that is where the lesson truly sinks in) but why we are - so asking why is history important is no different than asking why each and every one of us is important.

The metaphor that has been coming up roses lately is that of a historic building, any historic building, that is torn down, and removed from the

landscape that people once, and still, walked. The stairs, out front, where once a summer day might have been passed, saying hellos, eating a lunch, once gone...no longer do we drive by (always in a rush now) and say, "Remember when we used to sit there and..." ...and without that small push, the story, just like the wind, and the building's dust, is gone. When we have no more memories, and the stories are silent, what do we have left? For every action is a story waiting to be told. Which is why, while yet another bumper sticker, there's a better turn of phrase to be had - "History! Without it, YOU don't exist!"



The Bethel Historical Society is, as is any non-profit, looking for its membership base to continue to support us this year with annual dues, but is also now looking for individuals and businesses who are willing to sponsor us as the impetus for more.

Below are two business who have decided that what we do, is wonderfully important, and have donated money toward our continued success in the new year. In return, they get their advertising here in The Lark, and on our website, and on all of the flyers and posters that go up

around town for all of our events. This article, beyond informing everybody that we're looking for more sponsors, more voices to help us continue to speak today (so that in the future, those who want to know from what foundations they were lifted from in Bethel, can find that information, and see it, touch it, taste it, revel in it - because it is our history, and it resonates in all of us) is also a great and wonderful, "Thank You!" to American Pride and Luxury Mortgage for being the first to take the leap with us, into the growing endeavor which will lead the Bethel Historical Society, The Bethel Lark, and the curious and seekers of Bethel into a time when history is not shoved beneath the staircase or the back of the closet, but is always revealed and revealed and lifted out into the sunlight (although remember, this advice shouldn't always be taken so literally and thus if you have old books full of historical tales, try to keep them in a less shining environment so as to keep them from fading and cracking - Ha!).

If you'd like to know more about becoming a sponsor, please contact Bethel Historical Society President Patricia Rist at info@bethelhistoricalsociety.com or just come on out to any of our events (see the schedule on the next page in that calendar item) and speak with any of us at any of the events that we have throughout the year.

LuxuryMortgage®

We Actually Like This Stuff

(so you don't have to)

Thomas Furey

Sr. Mortgage Loan Originator

NMLS # 88923 - Licensed in CT, MA, NJ & NY

4 Landmark Square, Suite 300, Stamford, CT 06901

203.569.4257 - tfurey@luxurymortgage.com

<http://www.luxurymortgage.com/tfurey>

NMLS Entity # 2745. Licensed by the Department of Corporations under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act, Colorado Mortgage Company Registration-203.327.6000. Check the license status of your mortgage loan originator at <http://www.dora.state.co.us/real-estate/index.htm>. CT Licensed Mortgage Lender, FL Licensed Mortgage Lender, Georgia Residential Mortgage Licensee # 23006-Four Landmark Square, Suite 300, Stamford, CT 06901. Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee # 6615 by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Banking, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1900, Chicago, Illinois 60603, (312) 793-3000, Maryland Mortgage Lender, Licensed by the New Hampshire Banking Department-#10099MB, Massachusetts Licensed Mortgage Lender/Broker, License #MC2745, Licensed Residential Mortgage Lender -New Jersey Department of Banking & Insurance, New Mexico Mortgage Loan Company License No. 03841, Licensed Mortgage Banker- New York State Department of Financial Services-122 East 42nd Street, Suite 4900 New York, NY 10168, North Carolina Mortgage Lender License # L-104218, Licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Banking-Mortgage Lender License #27662, Rhode Island Licensed Lender #20031560LL/ Broker #20092580LB, South Carolina BFI Mortgage Lender/Service, Texas Mortgage Banker Registration-Four Landmark Square, Suite 300, Stamford, CT 06901, Washington Consumer License # CL-2745. Luxury Mortgage Corp®, luxurymortgage.com® and Luxury Mortgage® are registered service marks of Luxury Mortgage Corp. All Rights Reserved.



AMERICAN PRIDE LLC

Patriotic Items
House Flags and Gifts
Lamp Shades
Lamp & Fixture Repairs

Store Hours

Tuesday-Thursday 9:30a.m. - 5:30p.m.

Friday 9:30a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Saturday 9:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.

Closed Sundays & Mondays

273 Greenwood Avenue

Bethel, CT 06801

(203) 792-5300

www.americanpridellc.com

Some Images From the Vaults



Folded away in a box with an interesting conglomeration of items (see story on page four) was a copy of the old Bethel Press. One of the most hard-to-find newspapers in Connecticut.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 2, 2012

Laura Ingalls Wilder

12:30pm - 2:00pm

Join us as we explore the life and family of the beloved children's author.

Activities will include:

Making Butter & Dolls & Crafts & Sugar in the Snow (weather permitting).

Stories, Songs, Dancing, Food & More... Come dressed for life on the prairie. Ages 5 and up. \$10 for

Members \$12 Non-Members Any questions, please call Mary Ferri

203 730-2726



February 16, 2012

A Taste of History

2:00pm - 4:00pm

History is served through experiencing foods of 1700s and 1800s Colonial

America. Peanut Soup, Vegetable Dishes, English Desserts of Whipped

Syllabub and Shrewsbury Cakes. Chicken Pie, Ginger Beef Fishermen's

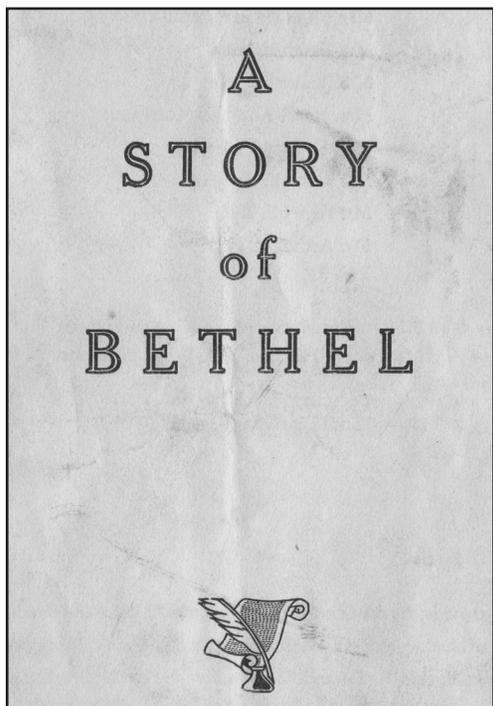
Stew, Carrot Pudding just to name a few. Come and enjoy the wonderful

flavors of a time gone by.

Call Patricia Rist (203) 743-5893

A Story of Bethel at 100 Years

A Plethora of Centennial Celebration Items is Unearthed



The cover of the program for the three-day centennial event that took place in Bethel in 1955.

A STORY OF BETHEL	
Written by Mrs. Helen McGrath Bryant	
Narration by Mr. Emmet Crozier	
Narrators John Mullaney Marianne Voulgaris	
Scene I	An Indian Family celebrates a Wedding. An early settler buys the Indian location.
Scene II	Interior Scene, 1759. Leaders of new community organize a Church.
Scene III	First Congregational Church is built, 1760. The British go through, to burn the commissary in Danbury. The Militia gather expecting a battle with the British, 1777.
Scene IV	1810 Phineas Taylor Barnum arrives in Bethel. 1832 Young Barnum publishes a newspaper.
Scene V	Bethel separates from Danbury, 1855.
Scene VI	Bethel men enlist for Civil War. Lincoln saves Bethel. 1861-65.
Scene VII	Disastrous fires 1870. Hat-Trimmers form Bucket-brigade.
Scene VIII	(Reservoir is built 1878). P. T. Barnum donates a beautiful fountain to his home town. 1881.
Scene IX	1894. Children attend a temporary school in the old town office. A Shepaug engine makes recess lively.
Scene X	Old Home Day 1910 - 100 years since Barnum's Birth.
Scene XI	1922. Small-pox scare. Bethel threatened with a quarantine.
Scene XII	Grand Finale - 1955. Happy Birthday, Bethel!

The list of scenes from the historical pageant that was performed during the centennial celebration.

I VI ERECT FIRST CHURCH	
1760 -	Concerning music in the church "chanted to the sound of the bassoon, clarinet, and flute the musicians were men.
1777 -	Revolution. 4/26 Saturday through Bethel. (Five and militia gather from surrounding Tryon on his way to Norway 4/27 Sunday morning, people notified that the British through Bethel, but are hereby by-passing the street assembled here. (General W LIGHT UP THE WINDOWS IN T

The script for the pageant was recently found and revealed some previously unheard stories!

The world in miniature was on display at the dollhouses event at the Second Meeting House.

The Kids' Victorian Halloween afternoon was full of crafts, fortune tellers, bobbing for apples, leaping for donuts, music, and all sorts of spooky games and fun.



On the Inside...

Page 1 - Ghost Tour

Page 2 - President's News

Page 2 - Painting the House

Page 3 - Kids' Halloween

Page 4 - Finding the Story

Page 5 - Dollhouses

Page 6 - Sponsors

Page 7 - From the Archives

Page 7 - Events Calendar

Page 8 - You Are Here!



Bethel Historical Society
P.O. Box 1776
Bethel CT 06801

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BETHEL, CT 06801
PERMIT NO. 21
RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

-- Halloween Adventures throughout the Halloween Season
 -- We're Now on Facebook! Like us at - facebook.com/bethelhistoricalsociety
 -- On the Calendar - Laura Ingalls Wilder, A Taste of History, and much more...

