

**WHO WE ARE**  
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President

Ken Minkema  
Vice-president

Barbara Hogan  
Recording Secretary

Joe Pepe  
Treasurer

Sam Becker  
Asst. Treasurer

Martha Becker  
Historian

**Committee Chairs**

Louise Brundage

Lois Casey

Bill Doheny

Betsy Gorman

Stella Johnson

Joe Pepe

Virginia Zukunft



**THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
WINTER EDITION 2007**

Dear Members,

The Board of Directors announces that Joe Pepe is the new Treasurer for the Society. Sam Becker remains active as our Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer prepares a monthly financial report that is always reviewed by the Board at its monthly meetings.

From those Financial reports, I would like to share some numbers relating to the operation of the Dickerman House. The figures reflect the expenses incurred over a twelve month period; November, 2005, through November, 2006.

Electricity	\$590
Telephone	\$280
Security System	\$448
Water	\$200
Lawn (mowing grounds)	\$1172
Insurance	\$2758
Total.....	\$5448

Of course as with any home, there are minor repairs, plumbing issues, cleaning supplies, and improvements. Our herb garden, while cared for by the volunteers of the Spring Glen Garden Club, had a maintenance cost as would any garden. The Society also rents a post office box, incurs newsletter printing and mailing costs, and is a member of professional preservation/historical organizations. Any grants received are for programs or projects and not for operating expenses.

The society is remarkably active. It is engaged in local preservation, provides tours to the public and school children, publishes local interest material, and operates the Hamden History Library and much more. Our membership dues brought in \$1,300, the antique show gained \$2,500, and we received income from the member users of the AT&T long distance program, and from sales and donations. Under the watchful eye and sharp pencils of our treasurers, the Society is well managed.

It was unfortunate that the grant the society did obtain for our new Dickerman House roof from the CT State Department of Tourism's Preservation Office, almost two years ago, was never put on the State Bonding Commission's agenda. Thus, the expense for the new roof will not be matched by any outside funding.

However, we have been saving the donations from the Giant Valley Association of Antique Dealers' Show over the last few years in anticipation of this expense. Thankfully our "in house" all purpose, carpenter/contractor volunteer and Society member, Bob Zoni is "on the job" or should I say, "on the roof."

The above list does not do justice to the Board members who wear more than one hat serving on many committees, making our Society an active and responsible community organization. Help us, help Hamden.

## Jepp's Brook Mill Site

You would think that there would be no new archaeological discoveries within the limits of Hamden, large though it is. Yet if you go to northern Hamden, to the corner of River Road and Still Hill Road, you'll find a series of genuine ruins along Jepp's Brook, a short walk south of the small bridge on River Road. The site consists of at least two foundations, a wheel pit, retaining walls, the remains of two dams, and a water race leading from the southernmost dam to the wheel pit. Preliminary research, provided in part by Prof. Robert Gordon of Yale University's Geology and Geophysics Department, who has walked the site, indicates that the site dates to at least the 1810's, since it is identified on a contemporary map by Moses Warren and George Gillet, and other evidence suggests the site may date even earlier. The site apparently once consisted of a grain mill, two saw mills, and a distillery (hence the name, "Still Hill Road"), while a tannery was in operation across the street. With the possible exception of the Joel Munson factory site in Sleeping Giant State Park, this may be the most undisturbed site of its kind in Hamden, harking back to a time when many mills operated along local rivers.

In 1808, Job Munson installed a distillery in cooperation with a sawmill run by the Bradley family. Munson in turn leased the distillery and a barn malt house to several other local businessmen. The Shipman-Denison Co. advertised in the *Connecticut Herald* that same year, seeking to buy rye. The following year, the same newspaper touted the distillery's "country gin of the first quality." In 1817, Seymour Bradley purchased the complex. When he died four years later, his widow, "Aunt Libby," ran the business. Legend has it that she could single-handedly unload a forty-gallon barrel of cider from an ox cart. By the late nineteenth century, however, all activity had apparently ceased. However, there is still much information to be found about the stories behind this site. The site lay undisturbed for many years, until the surrounding land was sold and developed three years ago for residential homes. Fortunately, the brook and the surrounding buffer were given to the town of Hamden. But several houses are close by, part of the water race on the west side of the brook has been covered over by earth movers, and the site shows signs of tampering.

The Hamden Historical Society and the Hamden Historic Properties Commission are seeking funding for the survey, and preservation of the Jepp's Brook Mill Site. It is the goal of this project to record, stabilize, and mark off the site (with signage or other appropriate measures) in order to preserve it. At the suggestion of David Poirier of the State Archaeological Survey, who has also walked the site, the Hamden Society and the Hamden Historical Properties Commission desire to engage a consultant or consultants to examine this site. This process would involve several distinct phases, though these would be defined more precisely by the consultant or consultants that are employed should funding be secured. These phases would include researching the site through land records and other sources; analyzing the site itself, if warranted, through archaeological methods; recording the site, providing a professional drawing of the site, and applying for State Register and State Archaeological Preserve designation. Finally, we would utilize some way of demarking the site, for example, through signage, fencing, or other appropriate measures.

We invite you to investigate this fascinating site. The best way to view the remains is to walk along the path on the east side of the brook. But please, stay off the ruins and leave them intact for future generations.

Ken Minkema, PhD.

## ANTIQUESHOW APPRECIATION

Since 1981, the Giant Valley Association of Antique Dealers have sponsored an Antique Show and Sale in Hamden for the benefit of our Society. In each of the last 25 years, we have operated a "Kitchen," and the resulting profits also benefit our Society. Both activities constitute the Society's annual fundraising effort and are used to maintain and preserve the 1792 Dickerman House.

Despite a rainy beginning on Saturday, the weather cleared, the crowds arrived, and the Kitchen hummed with activity. Once again we must thank the member volunteers who donated their time, made baked goodies, contributed salable goods, pleasantly served on the Kitchen staff, manned the bake table, and relieved dealers at their booths at lunchtime. The 2006 Society volunteer team included: Ginny Zukumft, Mary Embler, Betsy Gorman, Linda and Roger Rovero, Louise Brundage, Lois Casey, Barbara Hogan, Kathy and Kimberly Casolino, John and Marlene Carolla, Pam Rendeiro, Ken Minkema, Nancy Faughnan, and George Sweeney. Special thanks to Tom "the pie man" Whalen and to Joyce Gilbert, who not only donated and worked, but suggested a raffle and donated the item. Thanks also to Bob Zoni's friend, Tom. Our efforts brought the Society \$840. Thank you, Team!

Pictured at right are Lois, Betsy, Nancy, Kim, back right, and George's back.

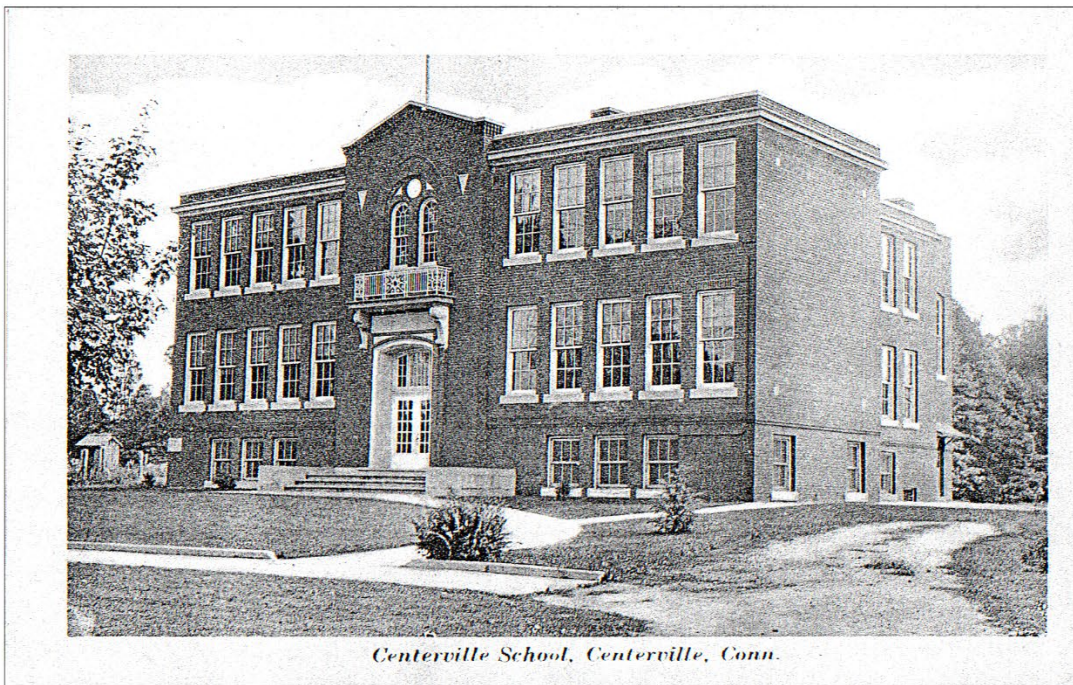


Below: Joyce hosts our bake table selling raffle tickets and our publications.



Raffle Winner: Ginny Zukumft

Giant Valley Association of Antique Dealers  
donated \$2500 to our Society



*Centerville School, Centerville, Conn.*

Photo courtesy The Hamden Historical Society Library. Hours: Tuesday 10-12 and Thursday 1-4

## **NEWSLETTER**

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 5512, HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518