March: Over Here - Mystic in the Great War  ~ Catherine Deichmann

One hundred years ago, in April 1917, the United States entered the long and costly Great War that had ravaged Europe for almost three years. Seemingly overnight, Mystic, Connecticut, became a community at war. In “Over Here: Mystic and the Great War,” local historian Catherine Deichmann will examine how the war effected the village of Mystic, and how the citizenry rallied to support the war.

Changes were apparent even before the U.S. officially joined the fight. During the winter, armed guards were stationed on the railroad bridge over the Mystic River. In February, the state conducted a military census of young men. The local Home Guard was recruited, and drilled in fields around town. Mariners were asked to keep a sharp eye for German U-Boats in local waters.

Once war was declared, the people of Mystic dedicated themselves to its support. Overnight, coworkers and neighbors became “aliens,” personal freedoms were restricted, and young men were drafted into the National Army. Suspicion, shortages, and rising prices became the norm, yet the village’s patriotic fervor remained strong. Clubs, schools and churches thought of imaginative ways to raise money for the war effort. Patriotic ceremonies and religious services honored those called to serve. New organizations such as the Red Cross and the YMCA developed a strong local presence. Several local industries obtained government contracts for goods and services. Women embraced an expansion of their traditional roles in the community.

The Great War an ocean away brought many changes to little Mystic’s economy, daily life and community. Relationships between citizens and their government were redefined. Paved roads replaced dirt, framed by miles of new telephone and electric wires. New buildings, businesses and bridges greeted returning soldiers. Many of these changes have faded over time, while others are still evident on the local landscape. As we honor the anniversary of America’s involvement, we’ll examine the impact of the Great War as seen through a local lens.

Catherine Deichmann has degrees in both American History and American Studies, and works as a researcher and interpreter of US maritime history at Mystic Seaport. Much of her past & current work has focused on the maritime commerce of the Civil War and on the effect of the war on New England’s coastal communities.

April: WWI’s Ambulance 255 & Spirit of the American Volunteer  ~ George King III

When Oscar Anthony Iasigi drove Ambulance 255 in the battle of Verdun, he would never have expected that in 2013 an ambulance bearing the same number would be in the Inaugural Parade for President Barak Obama....

The resurrection of Ambulance 255 began when George King III became captivated by the little-known story of how private Americans found a way to help the French before America decided to enter World War I: ‘With the need for a light, reliable, simple and small vehicle able to manage damaged roads & terrain, France was gifted 1,200 Model T Fords - - donated by the U.S. and driven by American Volunteers during the years 1914 to 1917. Volunteer drivers, most of them college students or recent grads, signed up for six months, paid for their own uniforms and their way to France, where they drove to the front lines – risking their lives, with many paying full cost.’

Join us on Wednesday, April 26, as Mr. King shares how this story of unparalleled volunteerism inspired him to embark on an extraordinary five and a half year project, including extensive research culminating in a 2009 trip to France to see the only original American Field Service (AFS) ambulance still in existence and over two years dedicated to creating the most accurate vehicle possible.

The guiding mission of today’s Ambulance 225 is to support of the recruiting efforts of public service volunteer organizations and encourage young people to volunteer in service to their communities and country.

Ed. Note: See p. 3 inside for a first hand account of American Field Service 1914 - 1917 by Franklin D.W. Glazer.
**Benjamin F. Stanton Pw’y.**  
by Judy Hicks

Benjamin F. Stanton is the name of a small private road off Jerry Browne Rd. on the Stonington side of Mystic. The official green street sign identifies it as a PWY. I pass this little road most every day and assumed the initials stood for Parkway. But how could that be, I thought, the road is like a driveway. My curiosity was piqued and I looked up the Stanton’s in Richard Anson Wheeler’s book, *The History of Stonington*. He writes that Robert Stanton was the first of a family line coming from England to Newport RI in 1638. He had a son, John, in 1674. Apparently enjoying his marriages, first to Elizabeth Clark with whom he had 12 children, and after her death in 1730, he moved to Richmond RI and married Susanna Lamphere in 1734. He was 61 years of age and fathered 13 more children with Susanna. Our Stonington connection is Job, a son from this second family. He was born in 1737 and also married twice and produced 2 families, but by no means so large. A son from his second marriage was named Benjamin F. Stanton. Benjamin married Maria Davis, and they had a son and named him Benjamin Franklin Stanton 2nd. He had 4 brothers and after their father died, the five of them joined together to form a partnership, The Stanton Brothers. They were very successful, buying up land and farms for farming, cattle and chickens. It was said that their property was so large that all 5 brothers were needed to conduct the business.

From what I have read, this land was west of Capt. George Denison, now the Denison Homestead, and included a large part of Quocataug Hill, Pequot Trail. Jerry Browne Road is in the middle of these two sites, so the Stanton road sign fits. In the Genealogical and Biographical Record of New London County reference is made to an “old stone house” on the hill. It was being used as a summer home in the late 1800s by a Mr. & Mrs. Middleton. Land and the house had been inherited by Mrs. Middleton, a descendent of this Stanton family. I wonder if this is the old stone house recently renovated by family members on Pequot Trail. If so, this family history carries on.

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**“Mystery” in the Archives**  
by Dorrie Hanna

Recently MRHS acquired a scrapbook from an anonymous source. It came with absolutely no background information. It contains a selection of sketches done in pencil, colored pencil and ink. Several of these clearly depict scenes in Mystic or Old Mystic. Most are signed either “M. Hempstead” or “M. Barker [or Baker]”. One or two are dated – done in the late 1930s or early 1940s.

Here’s the “mystery” (of course), who is the artist?? I see nothing relevant in our database. I've found nothing on-line after searching census records, city directories and newspapers. For some reason I’m thinking the artist is female, but that could be wrong. While the drawings are interesting even if anonymous, we are hoping for some supportable attribution. If you have any clues to the solution to this quandary please email me at info@mystichistory.org

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**MRHS WWI Commemorative Issue Gets Connecticut State Library Mention**

The Connecticut State Library has a website at ctinworldwar1.org/ The current edition of their Newsletter mentions our WWI Newspaper.

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**Rick Spencer & WWI Music A Success**  
by Margaret Austin

Our program with Rick Spencer & WWI music on February 22nd was well attended and wonderful - not only great music and "sing alongs" but the historical narrative of the USA involvement was informative and well received.

To add a culinary sense of reality to the evening all those attending could sample authentic WWI "Trench Cake". A specialty treat that was sent from home to the "boys" on the front line!!

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**Mystic River Historical Society Mission Statement**

The Society exists to collect, arrange, exhibit and preserve records, papers, photographs, artifacts, relics and related archival materials that document the history of the people who lived in the area around the Mystic River from the first settlement in 1634 to the present.

Officers:  
President - Lou Allyn  
Vice President - Margaret Austin  
Treasurer - Barry Thorp  
Corresponding & Recording Secretary - Elizabeth Holland

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published six times annually: September, October, November-December, January-February, March-April and May-June  
Box 245 Mystic, CT 06355

Issues of the newsletter are available for online viewing at www.mystichistory.org
Finish'd th' days, the clouds dispell'd,
The trasual o'er, the long-seought extrication,
When loll reborn, hih o'er the European world
(\textit{In gladness answering thence, as face dace to face},
reflecting ours, \textit{Columbia}).
Again th' star, \textit{France}, fair lastrosus star,
In heavenly peace, clear, more bright than ever,
Shall beam immortal.

- Walt Whitman

\begin{quote}
\textbf{I Beginning Work at Verdun}
\end{quote}

Section Sixteen's history may be described almost as a single operation. Its work during the five months before it was taken over by the American Army lay in one sector, and was connected during the entire time with the American and French flags flying from the church on the hilltop, and there by the Forest of Hesse, while eastward it stretched away destined to relieve. Here and there in the valleys lay tiny villages, squat, stone-faced cottages huddled about slate-roofed church spires, some of them almost intact and still inhabited, others a desolation of crumbling walls.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Rarécourt itself, from its bridge across the Aire, struggles up to its church on the hilltop, and there by the Forest of Hesse, to bring back the wounded to the divisional sorting-hospital, where other cars carried those who could be moved to specialized hospitals, or to the rail-head twelve kilometres farther.}
\end{quote}

The work at first was very light. Six men with their ambulances were always at the advanced posts, whence they could be called by telephone to the dressing-stations near the lines; two men with cars were stationed at the sorting-hospital; and three for police, water, and provisions. The forward posts were greatly in demand.

\begin{quote}
\textit{The sector Avocourt-Vauxois-Boureilles was very quiet. Only occasional shells came in. Almost imperceptibly, however, the work increased, until by June the road was a jungle of new life. Battering rams began moving up, and long convoys of ammunition trucks passed continuously. At the end of the month, the Germans attacked Hill 304, just to the right.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Celebration on the Fourth}
\end{quote}

At such a moment no one in the Section was willing to take advantage of the Fourth-of-July leave, and in appreciation of this General Collin gave us all to ourselves an Independence Day Fête, with a regimental band, with our General Staff sent down to have a good party, with "Marcellaise," "Star Spangled Banner," and decent weather thrown in. After the feast, the General talked to the fellows and went through the cantonnement which was in apple-pie order. The Boches, I should add, supplied the fireworks, but did not get any thing out of it in return.

\begin{quote}
\textit{This Fête marked the end of light work. A week later the Section left Rarécourt and moved up two miles north to the village of Carrefour, a huge stone barn, which the Boches had found the range of the day before. They shelled the barn until it had no shell-skins left, and then they left it in the hands of our own people. The shelling was continuous, and by mid-September the old Section had to be doubled. The roads in the forest were beginning to be swamps of clay spotted with shell-holes, and every other day the Boches began coming in. The forest fairly rocked with the concussion of French guns which each day lengthened their range, and by mid-September the roads were once again under fire. Every other day a car being crumpled in the ditch where a charging gasman sent it. But the strain and suspense only grew.}
\end{quote}

Then, on August 20, the attack came. Our Division was at ease on the left, its rôle being principally of an artillery nature. But at Avocourt our infantry moved forward, and through Avocourt the German prisoners began coming in. The forest fairly rocked with the concussion of French guns which each day lengthened their range, and by mid-September the roads were once again under fire. Every other day a car being crumpled in the ditch where a charging gasman sent it. But the strain and suspense only grew.

But little by little conditions grew quieter, the shelling less frequent, and fewer cars were called out. The change was coming, and by mid-September the old Section, which had been revolutionized, and then completely reorganized, eleven men left to go into other services or to return to America, and by the end of the month we had gone back en repos near Vitry-le-François.

No history of this Section would be complete without mention of our personnel, those first-class Frenchmen, Manual the cook, Louis Coudray, Auborn, Dogorn, and Blondet, the brigadiers Nogues and Boyer, and Grain the postman. Nor shall we ever forget our French officer, Second Lieutenant Delabesse, and the marching song, "La Patrie." To countless memories of darkness and discomfort, of danger and suffering and death, must be added those of sunlight and the long summer twilight on Clermont Hill, of section banquets and swimming in the Aire, of friendly faces and the gratification of work well done marked by the carrying of thousands of wounded. All this makes the story of Section Sixteen mean volumes to us.

Franklin Douglass Williams Glazier (1882-1939)

\begin{quote}
\textbf{“Every Time I Live the War”}
\end{quote}

A horse corporal on a French street.

\begin{quote}
\textbf{“The Canal Near Montgomery”}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{“Even This - “Pour La Patrie”}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Franklin D.W. Glazier - “Friends of France” and the American Field Service in France, 1914-1917 from ourstory.info/library/2-ww1/AFSbist/AFS2d.htm#c1}
\end{quote}
The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met on January 23, 2017. Attendees included: Cindy Allyn, Lou Allyn, Margaret Austin, John Parry, Liz Holland, Richard Semeraro, Barry Thorp, and Lyndsey Pyrke-Fairchild. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President L. Allyn. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accepting November meeting minutes.

President (L. Allyn): Lou will be speaking with the Mystic Post Office about the mistake with the MRHS PO Box – it was erroneously canceled, despite MRHS having prepaid for its use. The 2017 Budget was discussed, with total revenue approximately $24,301 and total expenses projected to be $24,424. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the 2017 Budget.

Corresponding Secretary (E. Holland): Six thank you letters were sent since the last meeting.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): This report covers details of the treasurer’s activities during the period 21 November through 22 January 2017. At this time all deposits have been made in the bank and all bills are paid current. The Treasurer’s account books are reconciled with the Chelsea Groton Bank statements. Expenses for this period are mostly non-discretionary commitments that include payments for utilities, snow plowing and to our curatorial staff. No unusual expenses for the period. Deposits included payments of member 2016 dues resulting from the September mailing, imaging fees, donations, a new Life membership and sales of Colors of Mystic at Amazon & the Mystic Seaport Bookstore. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. A motion was made, seconded & passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The MRHS Curatorial Committee met on Monday, January 23, 2017. Members were updated on various topics, including the World War I exhibit that we are presenting at the Mystic & Noank Library in March. Judy Hicks has been asked to present her "Four Women of Mystic" program at StoneRidge and Lou has agreed to assist her.

Finance (TBD): No report this month. Vanguard is doing well – we ended the 2016 year ahead. Dave Evans is still taking Colors of Mystic to the Seaport.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): The examination of the equipment and backups was performed on 1 January 2017. All equipment was found to be operating properly, was updated to the latest security program, and backups of the files removed to offsite for safe keeping.

Newsletter: (L. Allyn for J. Pryor) There is extensive content for the WWI special issue. The Board is considering a flyer to advertise the WWI Speaker Series.

Program & Membership (M. Austin): The WWI theme will run from February-May speakers. These include:
February 22: Rick Spencer – WWI Music
March 22: C. Deichmann – Over Here: Mystic in the Great War
April 26: George King – WWI Ambulance 225: The Spirit of the American Volunteer
May 24: Eury Cantillo – US Submarines in WWI

P&M Subcommittee of Hospitality & Membership (C. Allyn): Five new members joined since the last meeting, including one new life member. One member passed away.

Publicity/PR (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): We now have 320 Instagram followers. Dorrie continues to post on Facebook. We are now getting as many views on Instagram as Facebook.

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History Book Club (R. Semeraro): There were 7 participants in the book club’s last meeting, where the first half of Undaunted Courage was discussed. The books that will be discussed in the coming months are: January and February - Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West, March and April – Guns of August.

New Business: No new business.

Next meeting February 27, 2017 7:00 pm Mystic Noank Library
Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Holland, Recording Secretary

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The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met on November 21, 2016. Attendees included: Cindy Allyn, Lou Allyn, Margaret Austin, Jennifer Pryor, Lyndsey Pyrke-Fairchild, Richard Semeraro, Barry Thorp, and Stephanie Thorp. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President L. Allyn. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the October meeting.

Corresponding Secretary (E. Holland): Three thank you letters were sent since the last meeting.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): This report covers details of the treasurer’s activities during the period 20 October through 20 November 2016. At this time all deposits have been made in the bank and all bills are paid current. The Treasurer’s account books are reconciled with the Chelsea Groton Bank statements. Expenses for this period are mostly non-discretionary commitments that include payments for utilities and to our curatorial staff. No unusual expenses for the period. Deposits included payments of member 2016 dues resulting from the September mailing, imaging fees, donations (member and meeting attendees), dividend payment from our investment fund, and a royalty payment from Acadia Publishing for “Images of America”. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. Thorpe attached current P&L vs Budget and Balance Sheet reports. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The committee re-scheduled their November meeting to December 5. Dorrie has been working on the World War One project as well as other research. The Downes Building will be closed this week and also the last two weeks of December.

Finance: Lou, Barry and Dorrie will meet in December to prepare the 2017 budget and conduct a review of the books for 2016.

History Book Club (R. Semeraro): Books to be discussed: December – Island at the Center of the World, January & February - Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West, March and April – Guns of August (Lou sent Dana some map scans from the book.)


Information Technology (S. Thorp): The System Administrator performed computer updates and backups on Monday, 31 October 2016. All equipment appears to be in good condition and functioning.
The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met on October 24, 2016. Attendees included: Cindy Allyn, Lou Allyn, Margaret Austin, John Parry, Liz Holland, Richard Semeraro, Lyndsey Pyrke-Fairchild, Barry Thorp, Stephanie Thorp, and Lois Glazier.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President L. Allyn. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the September meeting.

President (L. Allyn): WWI Connect Mystic will officially begin on October 25. MRHS members will receive an email detailing the initiative in the near future. The list of potential participants is in the hundreds of names and we are going to crowd-source with the MNL to see if anyone has connections to any of the local names related to WWI.

Corresponding Secretary (E. Holland): Two thank you letters were sent since the last meeting.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): This report covers details of the treasurer's activities during the period 19 September through 23 October 2016. At this time all deposits have been made in the bank and all bills are paid current. The Treasurer’s account books are reconciled with the Chelsea Groton Bank statements. Expenses for this period are mostly non-discretionary commitments that include payments for utilities, payments to our curatorial staff and a $100 deposit into our Bulk Mail Account. No unusual expenses for the period. Deposits for this period included payments of member 2016 dues resulting from the September mailing, imaging fees, map sales and a small interest payment in our checking account. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The Curatorial Committee met October 24. Dorrie updated the group on new items and ongoing activities. Lou reported on the WWII project including the research on Mystic residents who served. It was announced that the Downes Building will be closed the week of Thanksgiving and also the last two weeks of December.

Finance (TBD): Vanguard requires that some of the MRHS money is moved to different money market accounts because of IRS regulations for non-profits. David is restocking Colors of Mystic at the Seaport.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): The System Administrator performed computer updates and backups on Sunday, 10/24/2016. The Administrator corrected the reported problem with the scanner by re-installing the scanner software and verified correct operation of the scanner, which is performing according to expectations.

Newsletter: (L. Allyn for J. Pryor): The next issue of the Portersville Press will be the membership issue. There are 303 current memberships. WWI Connect Mystic will feature prominently in the newsletter.

Program & Membership (M. Austin): Catherine Deichmann will not be speaking on monuments as originally planned, but rather on how war changed life in Mystic. George King will be making his ambulance available to the public for the week prior to his talk. We are currently exploring a possible location where his ambulance may be stored for the period of public viewing. • Markham Starr’s talk on The Last Trap Fisherman of RI was very well received and had about 25 people in attendance.

Publicity/PR (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): MRHS is up to 255 followers on Instagram and 1400 followers on Facebook and sharing is increasing.

New Business: None.

Next meetings January 23, February 27, March 20 and April 17, 7:00 pm Mystic Noank Library.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Holland, Recording Secretary
Membership Updates

We have eight new memberships since November/December 2016. They are Siobhan Kelly Gordon, Brian McDermott, Steven Telsey, Mary Pat Thayer, and Keith Traver as Individual Memberships, and Elizabeth Helbig and Carol and James Wollschlager as Family Memberships. We also have Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sproul with a Life Membership. Lucy Howell, a former member, passed away in 2016.

The 2017 member renewals have been pouring in. Thank you very much and we hope to see more renewals in the coming month.

~ Cindy Allyn Membership