“The title tells it all,” notes author Beverly Dodd about her recent publication, “The book is just that; a little history of a small, eclectic seaside community” that is Lord’s Point in Stonington. The land was formerly used as a sheep farm and quarry, then turned into a summer resort by an enterprising young businessman named James Lord, but the sense of camaraderie comes from the residents: “We don’t focus on superlatives — no big, beautiful beaches, no yacht club or seaside restaurants. It’s just a ‘feeling.’ In today’s fast-paced, often complicated society, driving or walking over the bridge and looking out across the Sound envelops you in its magic every time.”

On Wednesday, December 7th, join MRHS and author Beverly Dodd will share her insights & experience creating the book. Written principally for the enjoyment of Lord’s Point residents, the story holds a combination of history, photographs and personal anecdotes.

Beverly Dodd is a retired registered nurse who worked in her profession for over forty years and is new to the business of writing. She acquired the Lord’s Point assignment following retirement due to a son’s obligation to a former Lehigh University professor who expected to write the book himself, but never did. She has been pleasantly surprised by the interest shown by those living outside the community. Dodd has lived permanently at Lord’s Point for the past twenty years, having been a summer resident for her entire life.

Published by Beverly A. Dodd
Ask your local bookstore or contact LORDSPOINTHISTORY@YAHOO.COM

MRHS Gifts: A Little Bit of Home for the Holidays

This holiday season, shop local and support twice! Please consider gifting a MRHS membership or donation to honor the special people in your life. Support opportunities begin at just $25 annually. Donations are welcome in any amount.

MRHS-produced publications & films are available at the Downes Building, with many books also sold at nearby Bank Square Books or the Seaport Museum Store.

For further information, contact us at info@mystichistory.org or 860-536-4779, or stop by at 74 High Street in Mystic on Tuesdays 9a-noon, or Wednesdays & Thursdays 1-4p. Help honor our past for the “present” and future. ;)

~ Thank you & happy holidays!
BOOK REVIEW: **Who Do You Think You Are?**  
~ John Parry

It started simply enough. Bill Griffeth, a long serving and respected financial journalist on CNBC (Closing Bell) and a genealogy buff who had spent years researching his family, felt that he knew his ancestors, until he decided to take a DNA test. Done at the urging of an unsuspecting cousin, the test revealed that, "If the results were correct... the family I had spent years documenting was not my own."

The book is a well written mystery which moves at a quick pace as you follow Bill Griffeth’s emotional journey after the results of his DNA test come back, and then his path forward as he seeks to find out who his father or grandfather was. Although it raises many of the privacy issues that one should be aware of before undertaking a DNA test, it is important to realize that it is not just your privacy or that of your parents and grandparents which may be at risk. It could also involve the privacy of your children, your siblings or your cousins. A recent article in the Washington Post ("DNA’s new ‘miracle’: How adoptees are using online registries to find their blood relatives," Oct. 13, 2016) discusses, among other stories, how an American Vietnam veteran who had a brief relationship with a Vietnamese woman discovered a son he didn’t know existed. In another recent article, Bill Griffeth discusses a friend in his early 80’s who, after completing a DNA test, discovered that he had been adopted, a secret his family had kept from him (New England Historic Genealogical Society Weekly Genealogist, Nov. 2, 2016).

So, who do you think you are? Maybe you won’t know for certain until you take a DNA test. But remember, once this door has been opened, it can’t be closed again.

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**Downes Building News & Notes**  
~ Dorrie Hanna

**New Items ~** The MRHS has received a couple of new donations since my last report, including a Fenner folding doll cradle with bedding. These clever folding cradles, in both doll and human sizes, were manufactured in West Mystic in the 1880s. Another donation is a group of clothing said to have belonged to the wife of Seth Winthrop Burrows. Their house was relocated from Water Street to Mystic Seaport Museum in the 1950s when the Groton Savings Bank (now Chelsea Groton Bank) constructed their new building.

**Holiday Closings ~** We’re planning our usual closings in November and December. They are the week of Thanksgiving (November 22, 23 & 24) and the last two weeks in December. We’ll re-open on Tuesday, January 3, 2017!

Speaking of 2017 ~ Lou Allyn, John Parry and others are putting together a project for the Centennial of America’s entry into World War One. Already I’ve located a number of items in the MRHS collection that will contribute to this effort. I’m sure there are more photos and documents to be found that will help tell the story of life in Mystic at that time.

Dorrie Hanna is a longtime contributor to, & former editor of the newsletter. She is an active MRHS member and the Collections Manager.
Reflections on a new “Mystic”  

A new book entitled Mystic has been published, authored by Kent Fuller, Meredith Fuller and Lisa Saunders. It is published by Arcadia Press, the same publisher that the MRHS used when we put out our book Mystic in 2002. Ours is in black and white with photos culled from our archives and emphasizes the late 18th century and early 20th. The new book is bright and colorful with photos from the 1970’s, 80’s and 90’s. Many of the same scenes can be found in both books and one can still see a great resemblance. The stately houses along Gravel St. are unchanged, and many of the buildings on West Main St look the same. But here it is the physical state only that has remained. These commercial buildings have the same outlines and roof lines, but the merchandise they sell is completely different than what originally was advertised. The shopper’s dress and stance are different, and they were fewer in number. The sidewalks were empty by our modern standards. Mystic then was a village where one lived, shopped and maybe worked. Now, Mystic is our address but many times not our place in which to shop or work. This book, with its bright colors enhancing every scene, shows a modern Mystic. A Mystic which has become a tourist attraction. Way back when, we were a small self-contained village and now in contrast, a busy, active, and important village in SECT.

When MRHS worked with Arcadia, their series was called “Images of America.” Now the series is named “Images of Modern America.” I am glad that Mystic is still on the maps of interesting places!

Judy Hicks is an MRHS staple, and frequent contributor and committee member.

MNL-MRHS History Book Club Update

Our meeting this on November 8th was to discuss The Proud Tower by Barbara Tuchman. Thank you to Marilyn who held copies of that book available at the Reception Desk for those who wished.

With the holidays coming up, we decided that it might be preferable to divide the longer books into two parts, to discuss half at a time (per month). Consequently, we have adjusted what we will be reading into the following schedule:

For December 13: The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America, by Russell Shorto
We will discuss this book in toto, as it’s only 325 pages.

For February 14, 2017: Chapters 21-38 of Undaunted Courage
We will also be dividing The Guns of August: The Outbreak of World War I, by Barbara Tuchman between March and April meetings. I will let you know where the chapter break is as soon as I get a copy to see.

We would also appreciate anyone who could take on the role of secretary for the group. It only entails short emails such as this, to keep everyone abreast. See you December 13th!  ~ Dana & Richard

Dana & Richard Semeraro are MRHS members and cofounders of the History Book Club. The Club is a partner project of the Mystic-Noank Library and MRHS. New reader members are welcome at any time! Please join us on second Tuesdays at the Mystic-Noank Library at 7pm in the Activities Room. For more, please contact Richard Semeraro at rasemeraro04@gmail.com
April 6, 2017 marks the centennial of America’s entry into “The Great War” - World War I. The Mystic River History Society plans to commemorate this anniversary with a program in 2017 called WWI Mystic Connections. We invite your participation!

In addition to talks and articles about the impact and significance of the war to Mystic we are going to find out as much as we can about the men and women from Mystic who served in the armed forces during that time. To do this we are looking for anyone with a connection to these people. Do you have a relative, a story, letters, diaries, artifacts, etc. you can share with us?

The list of names at right is a compilation from local sources. We’re asking if you are related to, or know something about anyone on the list. If so, please contact us at Mystic.Historical@gmail.com or 860-536-4779.

Sources of the names are:

- Mystic Honor Roll 1917-1918 Catherine Deichmann has been spending a lot of time reading microfiche of old newspapers. She writes “The first Honor Roll Board was erected in October 1917 and, according to the newspaper, it was ‘displayed on the Liberty Pole. The wood was donated and it cost $15 to have the first set of names painted on it. By the end of the year, there were 122 names on the board. The local florist made a wreath to hang on it for the Christmas season. By April 1918 the first board was filled, and Alfred O. Crosby was collecting names for the new board.’

- Mystic Boys in Service (newspaper list) “Corrected to January 11, 1918”.

- Lower Mystic Cemetery inventory of graves (Route 1 west of Mystic).

- Elm Grove Cemetery inventory of graves with dates of birth and death (Route 27). Information provided by Joanna Case and Judy Hicks

- Monument In Commemoration of Loyal Service (at intersection of Route 1 and Library Street).

- CT State Library ctstatelibrary.org/ww-1-veterans/ Information sourced by Kit Hartford and Rod Cook.

- Stonington Town Hall memorial (Elm Street Stonington). On one side it reads “This memorial made possible by the uniring efforts of the J.F. Trumbull, Woman’s Relief Corps No.34 - Dedicated Nov.11, 1930 by James W. Harvey Post No.58 The American Legion”. The Relief Corps chapter was disbanded in 1932 see chs.org/findng_aides/ransom/116.htm.

There are only a few names on this memorial that appear on any of the other lists. We do not know who these people are but any information leading to the source of the names would be greatly appreciated.

Ed. Note: Due to the extensive content, only the names and Mystic Honor Roll/Service Branch are listed. For complete list & cemetery information as a pdf, please request at MysticHistorical@gmail.com

TIP: Our online readers can zoom to enlarge the fine text by a) pressing “Command” and “+” keys on a Mac or “Control” and “+” on PC or b) Select “View” and “Zoom” in browser menu bar.

Photo from Mystic River Historical Society.
Sheet music for "Welcome home" A. J. Starkey Music Co., 1918

Longson Edward Army
Loveless Helen G. Army
Lucy John F. Navy
Lucas George Eyreet
Lusigne Earl mixer
Lyon Earl Bowers
Lyon R. R. Army
Lyon R. R. Army
MacKenzie Catherine G.
Macnutt Harry Army
Main Harold Army
Manece Enrico Army
Mansini Enrico Army
Marchand John Henry Navy
Marchand William Navy
Maroney John William Navy
Massey Edward Army
Mason Charles P. Navy
Mason Donald G. Navy
Mason James Ryley Navy
Massazone Munio Army
McClave Edward Navy
McDonald Sarah (Miss) Red Cross
McGann James E.
McIntosh Charles
McKean James J. Jr.
McKeene Edward Navy
McKee Joseph Army
Mckey Leo Navy
McKne Lulu Navy
McLaughlin Oscar T.
Mcmullen William Army
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McWilliam Robert Army
Meehan Thomas Navy
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Menge Henry Paul Army
Merrill Harold Willard
Miller Alex G.
Miller Alvin P.
Miller Elias William Army
Minnor Harry Army
Mitchell Frank T.
Mitchell Harold R.
Mitchell Charles Navy
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Morgan Christopher L.
Morgan Earl Andrew
Morgan Lyman Cotton
Morgan Richard W. Army
Morgan Otto Army
Mother Edmon Army
Mother Edmon
Mouline Fred H.
Monastario Munio Army
Murphy Bernard Army
Murphy Clyde Army
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Murphy Mark William Army
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MRHS Membership 2016

To All MRHS Members~

This is the issue of the Porterville Press where we are pleased to list all our members for the year 2016 including our newest Life members, Liz and Lynn Holland. If your name is here, we sincerely thank you for your continuing support of the Mystic River Historical Society. It is your dues that provide the money to staff & maintain the Downes Building, print and mail this newsletter, provide a local history resource to the Mystic community, and so on.

If you don't find your name on the list we are sad to say that you have not yet paid your dues for this year. If you really would like to maintain your membership and Newsletter subscription please send $25 Individual or $50 Family or $75 Contributing to PO Box 245, Mystic right away. Thank you!

Cindy Allyn – Membership and Lou Allyn - President

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Liz and Lynn Holland. If your name is here, we sincerely thank you for your continuing support of the Mystic River Historical Society. It is your dues that provide the money to staff & maintain the Downes Building, print and mail this newsletter, provide a local history resource to the Mystic community, and so on.

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Cindy Allyn – Membership and Lou Allyn - President

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Mr. & Mrs. Brian A. Thorp
Mr. Robert Walker

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Stuart Lamson & Leah Prescott
Bailey & Jennifer Pryor

Mr. Steve White
Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Whitford
Mr. & Mrs. Richard S. Williams
Ms. Delight Wolfe
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wolfe

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Mr. Leonard C. Reid
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Sinnett
Mr. Morgan St. John
Mr. & Mrs. C. William Stamm
Mr. & Mrs. Barry L. Thorp
Mr. & Mrs. Brian A. Thorp
Mr. Robert Walker

~Life (Honorary)~

Mr. & Mrs. Jon Kodama
Stuart Lamson & Leah Prescott
Bailey & Jennifer Pryor
September 2016 Meeting Minutes

The Mystic River Historical Society Board of Trustees met Monday, September 19, 2016. Attendees included: Cindy Allyn, Lou Allyn, Margaret Austin, John Parry, Liz Holland, Richard Semeraro, Barry Thorp, and Stephanie Thorp. The meeting was called to order at 7pm by President Allyn. A motion was made, seconded & approved to accept June meeting minutes.

President (L. Allyn): Reminder letters will be sent out to 48 members to pay their dues; 11 of those receiving reminders also didn’t pay last year and will be removed from the membership if they do not respond. Overall, the P & L is in good shape. • Colors of Mystic is selling well at the Mystic Seaport - thanks to Dave Evans for arranging their placement. Books are also at Clyde’s Cider Mill. • The walls at the Lower Mystic Cemetery were repaired in August. • CT League of Historical Organizations is offering an exhibit on WWI – a few Board members will attend.

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

Treasurer (B. Thorp): For 21 June - 18 September 2016, all deposits have been made in the bank and all bills paid current. Account books are reconciled with the bank statements. Expenses are mostly non-discretionary, including utilities, annual heating/cooling system maintenance, building insurance and curatorial staff pay. There were no unusual expenses for the period. Deposits included payments of member 2016 dues, income from book sales for Colors of Mystic, and a small interest payment in our checking account. The present balance in the Mystic Groton checking account is positive. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The Committee met 9/16. Dorrie thanked members for filling in while she was on vacation and gave an overview of current activities. The Mystic Flag Committee has expressed an interest in depositing their archives at the Downes Building. Lou Allyn discussed the proposed "Mystic in World War I" project. Dorrie and Dave Scott will represent the MRHS at the Groton History Fair at GPL.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): The System Administrator performed computer updates & backups Sunday, 9/18/2016. All equipment appears to be in good condition & functioning as designed.

Newsletter: (L. Allyn for J. Pryor) The September newsletter will be digital only, while the Sept/Oct issue will be both digital & print.

Program & Membership (M. Austin): All seven speakers have been lined up for the Fall 2016/Spring 2017 season. They include: Markham Starr, Michelle Moon, Beverly Dodd, Rick Spencer, Catherine Deichmann, Mr. George King III, and Eury Cantillo. The MRHS survey was well received and will be used to inform decisions on programming. Immigration was the highest rated area – where did they come from, how did they get here, cemeteries, and genealogy were among the top choices. The program for immigration will likely take place on the second half of 2017.

P&M Subcommittee of Hospitality & Membership (C. Allyn): Six new members joined over the summer. Three members died over the summer.

Finance (TBD), Publicity/PR (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): No reports.

New Business: Richard Semeraro had 10 people at the History Book Club – The Proud Tower and Lawrence in Arabia have been selected for this fall.

Next meeting is October 24, 2016 7:00 pm Mystic Noank Library.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Holland, Recording Secretary

What are Archives & Why do They Matter?

The following article is from the Fall 2016 issue of Connecticut Explored. It speaks to the Mission of the Mystic River Historical Society and our extensive collection of archives of Mystic.

Archives n. — 1. Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the long lasting value of the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained separately to preserve their context and original order, and are described as a unified whole. 2. An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations. 3. The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections. [adapted from the Society of American Archivists’, A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology.]

Each day, individuals, organizations, institutions and governments create and gather information which allows them to perform their duties and functions and fulfill their obligations. Archives tell the stories of individuals, groups of people, and institutions. Family and institutional archives help to form a sense of identity and help us to understand our culture as well as the cultures of others.

Most records creators don’t normally create their record with historical research in mind, so the original records may provide a less biased account of events than secondary sources. Open and accessible archival records provide transparency into the development and implementation of public policy and the evolution of human rights, property rights, legislation and constitutional law. Connecticut’s archival records, which date from its establishment as a colony to the present, record the rich and diverse history of Connecticut, its contribution to the legal, political, and economic development of the nation, and the accomplishments of its citizens.

Archival institutions are important because they collect and preserve the documents that serve as evidence of these activities and which tell us about the individuals, organizations, institutions and governments that created those documents. They are crucial to collecting, preserving, and making these unique records accessible to present and future generations. Government archival institutions preserve the records of an open democracy and safeguard the rights and freedoms of all citizens. Archivists and archival institutions are at the forefront of preserving historical records in whatever formats they come in such as paper, maps, photographs, and architectural records, as well as moving images, sound recordings, and electronic records.

— Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board
Membership Updates

We have two new Family memberships -- Stephen Menno and Neal and Jane Bobruff.

And we are sad to report the loss of long time members – Jean Evans and Marsh Enquist with their passing.