Join us on Wednesday, December 5th when Joan Warren will be giving a presentation on Pauline Sands Lee’s World War I war experiences in France. The focus will be on the first of Pauline’s two war time trips and will include many of her images and extensive excerpts from her journals.

“My great-grandmother, Pauline Sands Lee, lived in Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY all her life. Her Quaker family roots pre-dated the Revolutionary War. Pauline kept journals of her travels and home life from 1888 until 1937. The majority of the thirty-eight journals are private notes and travelogues comprising descriptions, postcards or mementoes. I believe, though, that the six journals she kept in France from November 1916 to April 1918 were written with the intention of making a public record of her wartime work. She felt driven to help the French during the war and became an American Fund for French Wounded (AFFW) volunteer. The journals are detailed first-hand observations of war-time France. They include postcards of the many cities and towns through which she travelled and photographed. She shed light on individuals coping with the back side of war. Pauline plumbed her journal records extensively to write articles and personal stories of wartime France which she sent back to local newspapers. She also solicited funds for AFFW to purchase vehicles for delivering medical supplies to large and small hospitals in France. Because of Pauline’s competence and initiative she was entrusted with setting up a supply substation depot in Quimper, France. Her first journey closed with an excursion to war-torn Verdun.

While my talk only covers Pauline’s first AFFW trip, I want to note that her second trip was equally productive. Covering September 1917 to March 1918 Pauline set up a substation depot in Chambéry (NE France) to supply hospitals in the area. She supported American “boys” through canteen work and hospital visits and documented interactions with townspeople and conversations with GI’s about their personal experiences on the Front.”

Joan Warren has always been interested in history and is the unofficial historian of her family. Her great grandmother, Pauline Sands Lee, lived in Cornwall on Hudson NY where Warren spent the first five years of her life. After her family settled in New Hampshire, when Warren was in her teens, she became interested in her great grandmother’s journals, and was bequeathed them when her father died. For over 20 years she has been working in her spare time on the six Pauline Sands Lee’s journals covering her World War I experiences in France.

Warren’s undergraduate degree is from University of New Hampshire in English and Education. She also has a Library Science degree from the University of Rhode Island and an Administrative degree from Southern Connecticut State University. She is a career librarian, having worked in public libraries and school libraries for 39 years, retiring from the position of Library Media Coordinator at Montville School District in 2007. She continues to pursue her family history interests.
Two elegantly framed portraits: At left is Lucy Arelia Holmes Crumb (1838 - 1915) with a slight smile and a carefully-colored hazel eyes, gold necklace, earrings & locket. Right is an as-yet unidentified woman with blue eyes, tidy hair and daintily-colored embellished blouse with a high collar secured by a gold broach. Photos by D. Hanna.

Two large framed portraits from the Coogan Family material have been sitting on a back shelf at the Downes building for a while now. When family member Bob Marshall was here for a visit, we asked him if he could identify these ladies, but he wasn’t sure who they might be. I was taking pictures of the portraits when I suddenly discovered that one frame held two images, not one. So we had three mystery ladies. Volunteer Cara Lopilatro was quickly able to match the newly revealed picture to a photo already in the collection of Lucy Arelia Holmes Crumb (1838 - 1915). The identity of the other two ladies is yet to be determined.

“Chicago Portrait Company” is stamped on the back of one portrait. This company produced images from 1893 through at least 1940. Typically, rural salesmen (sometimes referred to as “drummers”) fanned out across the countryside soliciting old photographs of revered ancestors to be made into impressive portraits suitable for framing. Portraits were available in pastel, crayon, or sepia and were executed on a heavy, curved card stock. They were offered at prices that were difficult to turn down.

In fact, these impressive-looking portraits were bargain priced, because the salesmen knew the real money was in the frames. Because the portraits were done on curved cardboard, the recipients could clearly see when they arrived that they would not be suitable for normal flat framing. What’s more, the anticipated portraits were always delivered in beautiful “tiger stripe wood” frames with curved “bubble” glass. The “wood” frames looked (and still look) expensive but they are painted plaster. These frames had to be rejected at the time of delivery if the customer didn’t want them. Given the choice between a beautiful frame or no frame at all, few people could resist paying quite a bit more (as much as three times what the picture cost) for a frame.

But, Aha! Now maybe we know why there was another portrait on top of the picture of Lucy — it saved the price of buying an additional frame. Yankees are thrifty folks!
MRHS Membership 2018-19

We are pleased to list all our members for the year 2018. If your name is here, we sincerely thank you for your continuing support of the Mystic River Historical Society. Your dues provide the funding to offer a unique local history resource to the Mystic community as well as the staff, services & physical facilities to grow, catalogue, maintain & communicate our collection.

If you don’t find your name on the list and would like to maintain your membership and Newsletter subscription, and/or gift a subscription to friends or family, please, send $25 Individual, $50 Family, $75 Contributing, $150 Benefactor or $350 Sustaining to PO Box 245, Mystic. Thank you!

Cindy Allyn, Membership and Lou Allyn, President

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~ Honorary Life ~
Mr. & Mrs. Jon Kodama  Stuart Lamson & Leigh Prescott  Bailey & Jennifer Pryor Family

September 2018 Meeting Minutes ---

President (L. Allyn): The Stonington Chronology 1619 – 1919 (Pequot Press) has been scanned into an Adobe pdf file and will be posted on the MRHS website. • Lou met with students at the Pawcatuck Middle School who are interviewing people who attended when it was the Stonington High School. He commented that it was a pleasure to see their interest in local history.

Secretary (L. Allyn for E. Holland): A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the June 2018 meeting. Liz reported that she & her family moved to Western Mass two weeks ago and will now be seasonal residents of Mystic. She will continue to serve as Corresponding Secretary.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): For the treasurer's activities during the period 19 June to 16 September 2018, all deposits have been made in the Chelsea Groton account and all bills are paid current. The account books are reconciled with the Chelsea Groton Bank statements. There were no unusual expenses during this period. Deposits included receipt of 2018 member annual dues, and book sales. • Additionally, MRHS received a most generous bequest from the Virgil Huntley estate of $10,000. Virgil was a long time member of MRHS who passed away last year at the age of 100. The bequest has been set aside in a separate account and will not show as a checking balance as with other donations. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. • A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Chamber of Commerce (S. Menno): Historic photographs of Mystic have been mounted on the conference room walls.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The Committee did not meet over the summer but meetings resumed September 10. MRHS participated in River Day in July and the Groton History Fair on September 29. Year to date, we have responded to more than 80 queries.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): The System Administrator performed computer updates & backups on 1 July, 4 August, 31 August, and 17 September 2018. Backup files were moved offsite for secure storage. During the July 1 update, the System Administrator updated Past Perfect to Version 5.0F1 on all computers and tested that the update operated correctly. Application & security software were updated and are current. All three computers received a security update. All equipment is operating properly at this time as well. • Networked operation of each computer was checked and found to be in good condition.

Lower Mystic Cemetery (L. Allyn): Flags were placed on veterans’ graves for Independence Day and then removed. This will be done again on Veterans Day November 11th.

Membership (C. Allyn): Since the last meeting Brian Thorp and Theresa Courchaine passed away; there are three new memberships, and 37 letters were sent reminding members to pay their 2018 dues.

Mystic Noank Library (R. Semararo): Recent books read by the History Book Club were Cleopatra, A Life and Hell in Good Company. Future readings are: October 9 A History of Venice, by John Julius Norwich (to Ch. 23) November 13 A History of Venice, (finish) December 11 SPQR, by Mary Beard (through page 608) January 8 SPQR, (finish) Per Wikipedia, “SPQR is an initialism of a phrase in Latin: Senātus Populus que Rōmānus ("The Roman Senate and People," or more freely as "The Senate and People of Rome.")

Programs (J. Parry for M. Austin): Upcoming meetings are: October – Catherine Deichmann on World War I Memorials December – Joan Warren on World War I – Pauline Sands Lee

Finance (L. Allyn), Newsletter (J. Pryor), Social Media (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): No report. New Business: None.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:35 pm NEXT meeting: October 15, 2018 7pm, MNL
Respectfully submitted, Lou Allyn

October 2018 Meeting Minutes ---

President (L. Allyn): Lou welcomed Marilyn Comrie to the Board. Marilyn is a Charter Member and was President when the Downs Building was built. He then thanked Steve Menno for replacing batteries in the fire detectors on the two high ceilings in the Portersville Academy.

Recording Secretary (L. Allyn): A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the September 2018 meeting.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): For 16 September - 14 October 2018, all deposits have been made in the Chelsea account and all bills are paid. The account books are reconciled with bank statements. • Expenses for this period are non-discretionary, including payments for utilities, Security, C11 non-profit registration, and curatorial staff. There were no unusual expenses during this period. Deposits included receipt of 2018 member annual dues, proceeds from the History Fair, and book sales. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. • A motion was made, seconded & passed to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Chamber of Commerce (S. Menno): 25 copies of the Walking Tour were printed and given to Dorrie.

Curatorial (D. Hanna): The Groton History Fair was held at the Groton Library September 29 – Dorrie, Dave & Cindy Allyn represented MRHS. • Per our usual holiday schedule we request that the Downs Building be closed Thanksgiving Week, the last two weeks of December and January 1st. The Committee will next meet November 26.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): System update and file backup was done 15 October 2018. The System Administrator performed computer updates and backups on 14 October 2018. Backup files were moved offsite for secure storage. Application & security software were updated and are current. All three computers received a security update and all equipment is operating properly at this time. Networked operation of each computer was checked and found to be in good condition. No problem with the printer connection was encountered. • Austin Thorp mowed the lawn.

Lower Mystic Cemetery (L. Allyn) The lawn was moved and all yucca plants were cut off below ground. Photographs and inventory of newly broken marker were taken. Several were of old epoxy repairs where the top halves fell off.

Membership (C. Allyn) The 2018 Membership List will be published in the next Newsletter.

Mystic Noank Library (R. Semararo): Future readings are: November 13 A History of Venice, (by John Julius Norwich (from chapter 24 on); December 11 SPQR, by Mary Beard (through page 608); January 8 SPQR (finish).

Newsletter (L. Allyn for J. Pryor): The Sept/Oct color issue of The Portersville Press is online & emailed. Print copies will be mailed soon.

Programs (J. Parry for M. Austin): Upcoming meetings are: October 24 – Catherine Deichmann on World War I Memorials December 5 – Joan Warren on World War I – Pauline Sands Lee

The Program Committee is working on a proposal to use money from Virgil Huntley’s gift to sponsor research and lectures by local students and adults.

Social Media (L. Pyrke-Fairchild): Information about Catherine Deichmann’s talk in October is posted on FaceBook.

Corresponding Secretary (E. Holland): Finance (L. Allyn): No report.

New Business: Marilyn Comrie proposal to do a reprise of the Helen May Clarke walk in the spring on the last Saturday in April was well supported

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm. Next is Nov. 19, 2018 7pm at Mystic Noank Library.
Respectfully submitted, Lou Allyn
Many thanks to the Mystic Garden Club for our beautiful wreath!

Throw Back Thursday! Happy Anniversary to the Daniel Packer Inn.

Side streets along the river are flooding this morning, after the snow storm last night, with 41 degrees and rain now!

On November 11, 1918, thousands of citizens from Mystic and surrounding towns gathered between the state highway and the Baptist Church to dedicate a new addition to the local landscape, a monument to the veterans of the World War. Ninety years have passed. Trees threaten to eclipse the site, and traffic speeds up and down Route 1 without noticing it or remarking its significance. As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that brought an end to the Great War, we'll take a closer look at this monument, how it came to be, and the men and women it calls us to remember.

WED. OCT 24
Mystic, Memory, and the Great War
Mystic Congregational Church Parish Hall
Membership & Holiday Gifts

Our current complete membership list is inside this issue. Thank you for your support!

Please consider the gift of local history with 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 Bank Square Books or the Seaport Museum Store. Shop local for twice the support - thank you & happy holidays!

info@mystichistory.org • 860-536-4779 • Visit 74 High Street, Mystic, Tues 9a-12n, or Wed & Thurs 1-4p