Over nine million acres of Indian Country in southern New England and Long Island was reduced to less than 30,000 acres by the American Revolution. Indians across the region adjusted in different ways to this rapidly changing world. One important and largely unseen shift involved the participation of Indian men in various forms of maritime labor - from shipbuilding to whaling. This talk focuses on the hundreds of Indians that found work in the ports of Mystic, Stonington, and New London and explores their “roots” and “routes,” the global social networks they formed, and their traveling histories from the objects they collected and stories they told. Dr. Mancini will present whale-ship routes mapped on Google Earth, details from explorations in Hawaii, New Zealand, and Alaska, as well as his own experiences on the “mighty waters.”

Dr. Jason Mancini is Director of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center where he has overseen its restructuring and strategic direction. Prior to his appointment, he served as the Museum’s Senior Researcher focusing projects on American Indian social networks, Indian mariners, urban Indian communities, race and ethnicity in New England, and cultural landscapes. Jason is also Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Connecticut College, Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Brown University, and Social Sciences Instructor at Sea for Sea Education Association (SEA). Jason holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Connecticut with expertise in the archaeology and ethnohistory of New England.

Please join us at the Mystic Congregational Church Hall, 7PM on October 25th for more.

—Jason R. Mancini, Ph.D.
Lower Mystic Cemetery Repairs ~ Lou Allyn

Every year we inspect the entire cemetery and photograph every tablet and monument needing attention. Then every few years the Lower Mystic Cemetery Board raises money to repair those that need attention before they suffer more harm. The year a generous grant from the Charles B. Allyn Foundation allowed us to hire Shawn Monument Company of Bradford, R.I. to repair 15 of them. I thought that you would be interested in before and after photographs of the different kinds of repairs that are done.

Leaning tablets are carefully dug out, straightened and set in concrete.

Sometimes the top part of a monument has shifted and is moved back into place & puttied.

Large Monuments can settle to one side over time as the earth under them moves into the space left when the casket disintegrates. The repair is to dig under the stone, lever it back into position and fill underneath.

Re-leveling a tablet is a similar procedure with new cement.

Even the smallest tablets need to be secured in place before they are lost.

Thin and tall tablets are subject to breaking in two or falling over. (Roger Shawn told me that sometimes this is caused by deer rubbing their antlers on the tablets.) Pieces cannot be glued back together and can only be left upright. When pieces are flat on the ground it is important to leave them there, note their location and carefully clear off the stone on an annual basis.

Tablets lying on the ground in one piece can be carefully dug out and set in place.

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 Tharp • Corresponding & Recording Secretary - Elizabeth Holland

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published five 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
Thanks for New Gutter Guards!

Board member Steve Menno contributed the materials and his time to install these gutter guards on the Downes Building. This should eliminate having to clean out the muck and leaves every year.

We would also like to inspect the gutters on the Portersville Academy roof. Does anyone know of someone with a drone and camera who could take a look?

George E. Tingley Photographs

Known for his portraiture, George E. Tingley (1862-1956) of Mystic promoted photography as an art form. Committed to the beauty of his local area, Tingley worked from his studio on West Main Street for 55 years and once said his intent was “to bring the attention of the public the loveliness of the Mystic scene.”

In April, MRHS received a donation of a series of bucolic Tingley images from Members Lou and Cindy Allyn. Below are a selection.

History Book Club at MNL ~ Dana Semeraro

The book to be discussed at the next meeting, Tuesday, October 10th, is “And Then All Hell Broke Loose: Two Decades in the Middle East,” by Richard Engel (2016).

Enjoy the beautiful New England Fall!

Got Greens for the Garden Club?

The Mystic Garden Club Green Sale is December 1 & 2. All proceeds from the sale are distributed to numerous community organizations, and provide scholarships for several students. Your generosity has made past sales a success.... Without greens there is no sale!

If you have bushes, shrubs, or trees that need pruning, club members can help you in Nov. (18-29th).

Please contact Pam McGee at (860) 536-3905 or pameladmcgee@gmail.com

Thank you for your support!
What is Freemasonry?

Not long ago, someone donated a couple of booklets to MRHS having to do with the local Masonic lodge, Charity & Relief Lodge No. 72, AF&AM. One booklet is a membership list of the lodge, corrected to 3/1/1962, and the other is History and By-Laws of the Lodge, dated 1954.

Charity and Relief Lodge, organized in 1825, started life as two separate lodges, Charity Lodge and Relief Lodge, which at some point decided to merge, leading, obviously, to Charity & Relief Lodge. There are hundreds of names listed, so it’s likely that the list includes everyone who ever belonged to this lodge since the beginning of the 20th century.

Legend has it that Freemasonry originated with medieval stonemasons at a time when the majority of the population was illiterate, and stonemasons, the construction workers of their time, were some of the few common folk who were allowed to travel away from their homes. Since they were just as illiterate as the rest of the population, they developed a set of symbols that allowed them to communicate with each other during the construction of the churches, castles, and palaces that they built throughout England and Europe. There wasn’t anything particularly secret about these symbols; they all had to do with which stones belonged where in the walls, and who was actually a qualified stonemason.

It’s impossible to confirm any of this, but it certainly makes a good story. Fast forward a few hundred years to England and Northern Europe, where groups of men gathered to form Masonic lodges, even though they were far removed from the stonemason’s trade. The earliest known reference to “Masons” was in a document from the year 1390, which was a copy of an earlier work. But in 1717, four individual lodges formed the Grand Lodge of England, and records going forward are much more complete.

Within 30 years, the fraternity had spread through Europe and the American Colonies. Some of the names familiar to us (Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, John Hancock, Marquis de Lafayette, Baron Friedrich Wooster, who died in battle in Danbury, among them) were staunch Masons, and used Masonic principles in their contributions to the American republic.

Prominent Connecticut Masons during the Revolutionary Period include, of all people, Benedict Arnold; David Humphreys, who served as Lieutenant Colonel and Aide-de-Camp to General Washington, as well as several diplomatic offices; Israel Putnam, who served as one of four major generals appointed, and who served throughout the war; possibly Roger Sherman, but no substantial proof exists; and David Wooster, who died in battle in Danbury.

Freemasonry is now a worldwide fraternity that emphasizes personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy. During the late 18th century, it was one of the organizations most responsible for spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment: the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual; the right of all persons to worship as they choose; the formation of democratic governments; and the importance of public education.

Masons are not the only part of the fraternity, either. There are numerous organizations that welcome wives, sons and daughters of Masons, and some that welcome women and youth of all genders, with or without a Masonic connection.

Here are a few of the better known:
- Order of the Eastern Star (men and women, mostly Masons and their wives);
- Order of DeMolay for Boys (teen-aged boys, mostly sons of Masons);
- Order of Job’s Daughters (teen-aged girls, aged 12-20, related to Masons);
- Order of the Rainbow for Girls (teen-aged girls, aged 12-18, related to Masons or Eastern Star members);
- Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, better known as Shriners; open to 32nd degree Masons. Although the Shrine was formed primarily for good fellowship purposes, Shriners also provide extensive financial support for health work among children. They support 17 Shriner hospitals for children with disabilities, illnesses, or injuries, as many as 800 patients altogether, who receive free treatment upon recommendation by a Mason. This recommendation is obtained as simply as by asking a Masonic friend for help.

There are many other Masonic organizations with exotic names, but the bottom line is that, no matter what name they give themselves, Masons are dedicated to supporting and improving their communities.

In the interest of full disclosure: I belonged to Faith Assembly #25, Order of the Rainbow for Girls, between the ages of 12 and 18. It was a wonderful organization for young people; I learned a lot and benefitted greatly from those lessons.

Masons are thought to be secretive, but it turns out that their principles are documented in books and on the web, and anyone who is interested can just Google “freemasonry” and find out more than they ever wanted to know. They are not characters from The DaVinci Code. Masons are thought to be a Christian organization, but there is nothing in their principles that requires this, and persons of other religious persuasions should be welcomed. And Masons are not a cult.

Here are a number of their published principles:
- Since God is the Creator, all men and women are the children of God. Therefore, all men and women are brothers and sisters, entitled to being treated with dignity and respect.
- Each person must take responsibility for his/her own life and actions. Therefore, regardless of situation, financial, intellectual, medical, or social, excuses any person from striving to be the best person he/she can be.
- No one has the right to tell another person what he or she must think or believe. Therefore, every man and woman has an absolute right to intellectual, spiritual, economic and political freedom. All tyranny, in every form, is illegitimate.
- Each person must learn and practice self-control. Therefore, even when we are angry, we must not be violent; when we are tempted to be selfish, we must be charitable; when we want to give up, we must go on; and when we are hated, we must return love, or at least, not hate back.
- Faith must be in the center of our lives. Therefore, whatever your faith is, it is central to a good life.
- Each person has a responsibility to be a good citizen, obeying the law. Therefore, if we believe change is necessary, we should pursue change in legal ways.
- It is important to work to make this world better for all who live in it; this is our duty.
- Honor and integrity are essential to life. Life without honor & integrity is without meaning.

As to Masons in our own community, the new Masonicare facility should come to mind. Masonicare facilities are supported by Masons worldwide; an initial internet search brought up a facility in Australia, for instance, and our own Masonicare facility should come to mind. As to Masons in our own community, the new Masonicare facility should come to mind. Masonicare facilities are supported by Masons worldwide; an initial internet search brought up a facility in Australia, for instance, and our own Masonicare facility should come to mind.
Maxson, back in 2010’s article in The Day. Prior to that, the Mystic lodge's history goes back to August 25, 1825, and originally there were two lodges in Mystic. The Mystic fraternal organization was located in the Central Hall building on West Main Street until it was razed by fire in December 1910. At that point, the Masons decided to build a new temple on Gravel Street. This was conveniently located across the street from Mystic Hook & Ladder Company (many Masons were also volunteer firefighters).

Over the years, a variety of lodge mergers occurred, until today there are numerous lodges scattered around Connecticut, but Charity & Relief Lodge is no more. Local lodges at present include Groton, Stonington, Montville, Norwich, Niantic (3), Preston, Old Saybrook and Colchester.

MRHS is researching this topic as a part of an initiative of Mystic’s History of Community. The membership booklet contains many familiar local family names, indicating it was a significant aspect of Mystic’s identity. In subsequent issues, we hope to provide more information about individuals on that long list, who were active members of the Masons. It would be interesting to know why they joined, what it meant to them, how it shaped their lives, how the order contributed to our community.

A bibliography for this article is available on request.
Annual Meeting Minutes ---
The Mystic River Historical Society met on May 24, 2017.

President Lou Allyn opened the meeting at 7:30 and welcomed the attendees, asking for a show of hands by members present. It was declared that a quorum was present for an Annual Meeting which was then called to order. The minutes of the previous Annual Meeting had been published in the Newsletter and posted on the Society’s website and so a motion was asked for to dispense with the reading of the minutes. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

Steve Mennino was introduced as a nominee for a first term as a Trustee and nominated three Trustees for re-election: Margaret Austin – second term, Lou Allyn – third term and Richard Semeraro – third term. A motion was made, seconded and passed to elect the slate as presented.

The Treasurer’s Annual Report was then read. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the report as presented.

The President then gave his report for the year 2016-2017, including highlights since the 2016 Annual Meeting: Attendance at monthly membership meetings increased over last year. Speakers at our fall Membership Meetings were:
- Mark Starr – the Last Trap Fishermen of Rhode Island
- Michelle Moon – The History of Coastal Tourism
- Beverly Dodd – Lords Point, Just a Little History

The start of 2017 began the MRHS Mystic in World War I series of programs and events. Speakers were:
- Rick Spencer – The Music of WWI
- Catherine Deichmann – Over Here: Mystic in the Great War
- George King - WWI Ambulance 225: The Spirit of the American Volunteer
- Eury Cantillo - US Submarines in WWI

In addition to the five print & digital issues of our newsletter, The Portersville Press, we published a Special Edition, at the suggestion of our Newsletter Editor and Publisher, Jennifer Pryor. The “Mystic Times” issue commemorated the 100th anniversary of America’s entry into World War I with photographs and articles about various men and women from Mystic.

Under the guidance of Harry White we conducted an online survey to find out from our members what they would like our future direction to be. Number one on the list was Immigration and Family which will be the focus of our programs in the coming year.

Our curatorial staff of Dorrie Hanna – Collections Manager, and assistants Betsy Boucher and Louisa Watrous also deserve recognition and credit for work they do updating, maintaining and researching our collections.

And finally, we are working with the Mystic Noank Library to find ways for us to collaborate with each other: Richard Semeraro initiated a History Book Club, the Ames Room hosted a display of WWI artifacts and displays, and the collection of local and Connecticut history books have been reshelved into separate locations for circulation and for reference.

Thank you for your support with your attendance, dues and gifts and being Newsletter patrons.

The 2018 Annual Meeting will be held May 23rd. The Annual Meeting was then adjourned.

There was no June meeting of the MRHS board as it did not achieve a quorum.
Welcome, Katherine and Jack!

MRHS wholeheartedly welcomes the very newest Family Members: twins Katherine Spencer and Jack Thomas, born on June 20th, 2017 to Liz & Lyn Holland and pictured below with their proud older siblings, Charlotte and Pete. Congratulations & best wishes to the whole family!

Photographs by Heartlove Photography LLC.

The Newest MRHS Members!
Membership Updates

We welcome Francis Moon who joined MRHS as a Contributing member. And we will miss four members who died over the summer. They are Audrey Golub, Mrs Craig Haines, Eleanor Jamison and Marjorie Moore.

Each year we send out our annual membership renewal letters in January. Since some members prefer to renew later in the year, we will soon be sending out reminders to members who have yet to renew their membership for 2017.

Everyone’s support is important to us! Thank you.

~ Cindy Allyn Membership