

NEW LONDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2013

Lives Revealed

In *A Midwife's Tale*, University of New Hampshire history professor Laurel Thatcher Ulrich created a new view of women of the colonial and early federal period. Published in 1990 and based on the diary of Martha Ballard, a midwife living in Hallowell, Maine, Ulrich illustrated a life filled with activity, bravery and over 800 baby deliveries. Through Ulrich we were able to see that women too were integral participants in the growth of the early republic and local economies and not simply the help who took care of the children, spun yarn, and made the meals while their husbands farmed, fought wars, and created a democracy. This work, now considered a classic of social history, propelled Ulrich to the top academic circles.

About fifteen years ago, a Yale graduate student in history, inspired by *A Midwife's Tale*, and thinking, "turnabout was fair play," ruminated to her major professor that for her dissertation she would love to show colonial men as nurturing family members – if she could only find the right colonial-era diary to base such a study on. Yale history "don" John Demos reached up to the bookcase behind his desk and asked Allegra di Bonaventura if she had ever heard of the *Diary of*

Joshua Hempstead.

Di Bonaventura was captivated by Hempstead's words. She began indexing the book with thousands of entries so that she could track the small New London household recounted through this text from the past. She knew that she had found the right source to reveal the life of a colonial man shaped by his love of his family, but she kept bumping up against another presence, Adam Jackson, from 1727 to 1758 a slave owned by Hempstead. Jackson was clearly a part of this household but not of the family.

With so many entries listing Adam's work (written in a journal undoubtedly established to keep track of work) it was clear that this manuscript documented the working life of a slave over much of his life – information that simply existed nowhere else. But what of the rest of this man's life, what of his family; Hempstead offers only a few clues.



Captured by a strong desire to compare these two men and their families, di Bonaventura took hold of those clues and

began searching knowing it was extremely unlikely she would find much. But amazingly, she found a researcher's dream – the ownership of Adam's mother, Joan, was contested in over thirty years of court cases. Through these, Adam's family, especially the life of his free Black father John Jackson, is also revealed.

The fact that the family fighting over Joan were Rogers, brought a whole new dimension to the story, as the religion espoused by John Rogers, and the family relationships and connections of the Rogers needed to be explained to understand the issues at stake. Then the twist that brought Joan to be property of a Winthrop added another family whose stories needed to be told. In the end, di Bonaventura creates a history of early New London bringing all of these threads together with a narrative style that almost makes one forget this is a history book you are reading.

Of course there are limitations: Di Bonaventura is looking closely at these lives through the lens of the families' experiences that she is focused on. So you won't find out about Hempstead's

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“Ye Towne’s Antientest Buriall Place” More of the Many Douglasses

In the last newsletter we covered a few of the members of the Douglass family who are buried in the Antientest Burial Place of New London. This time we will be looking at one of the other sons of Deacon William Douglass and some of his descendants.

Capt. Richard Douglass was born July 19, 1682, the seventh child and second son of Deacon William and Abiah (Hough). On December 7, 1704, he married Margaret Abell, and they had eight children. Capt. Douglass bought a house lot on the east side of the town street, and “Raised his house,” according to the diarist Joshua Hempstead, on June 14, 1716. He was selected a tavern-keeper at least twice, and Hempstead has several mentions of selling hay (“40. hundr” in July 1722) or wood to him. Richard progressed through militia ranks, being elected captain of the first trainband in April of 1727. It is after this election that Hempstead begins to refer to him as “Captain.” He was a townsman, or selectman, earlier than that, being elected in December of 1720. Hempstead visited “Richard Douglass who was taken Sick at ye farm ye night after his father was buried” in March of 1725, but Richard survived that epidemic, which took the lives of his father, a brother, and a nephew (see the March newsletter).

The Douglasses seem to have been well off. They had servants and dependents, including a “New Negro Woman” who died in July, 1722, and four year old Sarah Conkling, whom they had baptized in June, 1730. On October 26, 1733, Hempstead “held a Court att Capt

Douglass & Convicted Robt Gore of Stealing a Silver Spoon from him. he was whipt 20 Stripes & Comitted for Dam[ages] & Cost.” He does not say if Gore worked for Richard. Hempstead also notes several times surveying for Richard, who as a descendant of one of the early settlers would have been entitled to a share in the commons.

On February 26, 1733, there was a court at Mr. Prentiss’s house “to Try Several Delinquents who were presented for disorders &c. Capt Richard Douglass was there with the many Spectators & went away about 4 or 5 Clock well & went over to Mr Winthrops point to help his people with a Scow Load of hooppoles & Lumber & before he got to Mr Stewards wharff as he was Steering the Scow fell down Dead So that he never Spoke a word more . . .” His funeral was two days later in the afternoon.

Richard’s brownstone headstone looks like a modern replacement of his original stone. His widow Margaret does not have a stone in the burying ground. She died April 18, 1752. In her later years she seems to have made her home with a daughter-in-law, the widow of Caleb Douglass (see below).

The oldest son of Richard and Margaret was Jonathan, born October 30, 1705. He was “published” to Lucy Christophers June 27, 1731, and married August 3rd. They did not have much time together. On November 7, 1732, Joshua Hempstead says that “Natt Shaw Master of the Norwich Scooner came from Ireland & have had the Small Pox in their passage. absolom King Jonathan

Douglass (who was Shaws mate) & Shaws Brother & two Indians died 5 out of 15.” In December Lucy Douglass “owned the covenant,” and had her child baptized Lucy on Jauary 7, 1733. Hempstead noted on October 22, 1739, “Last night about .9a Clock Lucy Douglass the only Child of Jonathan Douglass Decd Died aged about . . . years.” This Lucy has a stone in the burying ground which says she was “aged 6 yrs, 9 mos., 17 days” at her death. Her mother remarried and does not have a stone in the burial ground.

Near little Lucy’s stone is a footstone, but no longer a headstone, for a Deacon William Douglass, who was another son of Capt. Richard. William was born January 1, 1708, and baptized exactly one month later. He was one of three men who were “took in to the Church” on January 21, 1728.

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New London County Historical Society Incorporated 1870

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So Much Going On!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The past three months have been a time of energy and activity at the New London County Historical Society. We have had two author talks that brought over 100 people to New London to learn about its history. In March, 35 people came to the Shaw mansion to listen to author Michelle Coughlin discuss her new book, *One Colonial Woman's World*, based on the diary of New London resident Mehetabel Coit, a contemporary and neighbor of both Joshua Hempstead and Nathaniel Shaw, Senior. Ms Coughlin even convinced the owner of the manuscript to bring the 270-year-old diary that inspired her book, and her tale of discovery in tracking down the diary added an extra touch to her presentation.

In April over 70 people crowded into the community room of the New London Public Library at a joint event sponsored by the New London County Historical Society, the Hempsted Houses, and the Library. They were there to listen to author Allegra di Bonaventura discuss the writing of her new book, *For Adam's Sake*, based in large part on our manuscript of Joshua Hempstead's diary. Both talks were followed by a spirited question and answer session that provided further insights into both ground-breaking books. If you were unable to attend the talks, we have copies of both books for sale at the Shaw Mansion.

The Collection Committee campaign to raise funds to restore the painting by John Ewen, Jr. of the whale ship flags of New London is gathering momentum. We are half-way to our goal of 16 pledges of \$125 each. We have delivered the painting to the restorers, and it will be restored in time for the 2014 port call of the *Charles W. Morgan*. Please help us achieve this goal for a new kind of stewardship for our collections. We hope to be able to celebrate the restoration with an event to be held on the deck of the *Morgan* next summer.

Program Committee members Karyn Garside, Karen Beasley, and Fawn Walker are planning an exciting event for the evening of June 6th. With the generous

support and co-sponsorship of the Garde Arts Center, the New London County Historical Society will host an antiques appraisal and fund-raising event. Pull out the old gems and jewelry and dust off those treasures in your attics and basements, and join us for an evening of discovery. Well-known local antiques experts will assess your items and let you know whether you have treasures or... There will be an assortment of silent auction items to raise money for both the Garde Arts Center and the New London County Historical Society.

On June 23th please join us at the Mansion for Connecticut Historic Gardens Day. Susan Munger and crew her garden volunteers have been hard at work getting the grounds and gardens to look their best. We will have plants for sale, and there will be a number of events to entertain and educate our visitors.

If you can't make it to one of these events, please come by the Mansion to enjoy the collections, use the research materials, or to stroll in the garden. The New London County Historical Society needs both your financial support and your active participation to keep us a vibrant and relevant organization. Please continue your vital role to make our history available to all.

New and Renewed Members

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~Nancy Hathaway Steenburg

More of the Many Douglasses (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

It is difficult to determine the various activities of William because there was more than one William Douglass in the New London area at the time. Quite possibly William lived somewhere on or near the Douglass farm (on what is now Douglas Lane in Waterford), for most of Hempstead's interactions with him seem to have been about land, and took place outside of the town proper. On July 2, 1745, he "Set out to William Douglass's to Measure Some Land for him which he hath Sold to Anthony Whipple for L12 an acre." There was a William who was appointed lieutenant of the fifth trainband in May of 1748. This seems to have been located roughly in the area of the Douglass farm, so that is quite possible. However, Hempstead does not refer to him by his rank (Lt. Douglass), which he frequently did for militia officers.

The colonial records show that William was involved for a number of years in a dispute over money invested for the ministry owed to and by his father Richard's estate. The issue was eventually settled. William also had to get permission from the General Assembly to sell enough real estate to cover the debts of Richard's estate, which amounted to L235 16s 3d old tenor and were probably partly due to the dispute. He was also called upon to assist his brother Caleb's widow in selling enough land from that estate to cover its debts.

William was published to Sarah Denison on February 14, 1731, and they were married on March 4th. Over the next 20 years they had eleven children, all of whom seem to have lived to adulthood. Sarah was "took into the Church" on May 13, 1733. Hempstead notes this and

the baptisms of several of the Douglass children. William's involvement with the Congregational Church clearly continued, as he was elected a deacon June 25, 1782, at the age of 74. He died November 12, 1787. Sarah died May 12, 1797, "in the 87th year of her age," as her gravestone used to say. Her stone was standing, although partially spalled, when Edward Prentis published his book in 1890 (see references), but I was unable to find it.

The last Douglass stone is for Mary, the "Relict of Capt. Caleb Douglass," another son of Richard, and her daughter Rebecca, "Relict of Mr. Gideon Stacy." Neither the Douglass genealogy nor Hempstead says much about Caleb. While the headstone refers to him as "Capt.," Hempstead does not. Caleb apparently died late in 1750. On May 27th Hempstead records "an Infant of Caleb Douglass Baptized," then, sadly, on December 1st "a female Child of the Widow of Caleb Douglass's Late Decd Died this Evening." Then on December 19th, "two Children buried less than a year old. one the only Son of Caleb Douglass Decd. . ." This son was named Richard, and had been baptized November 27, 1743.

In January and February of 1751 Hempstead was involved in measuring land to be divided in part "to Calebs heirs." In February Hempstead also "was with Cuzn Joshua Moor at his Daughters the Widow of Caleb Douglass Inventorying ye Estate." Later that year, on August 2nd, he "went to visit the old widow Douglass att the young Widows."

Mary was baptized June 1, 1716, and

was published to Caleb April 23, 1738. They were married May 2nd. They had two children who lived to marry, Rebecca being one. She was born April 2, 1741. No date is given for her marriage to Gideon Stacy. The other daughter, Mary, was born in 1745 and married John Owen in 1767. The elder Mary "died Feb. 13th, 1797, aged 87 years." Rebecca "died Sep. 9th, 1800, aged 58 years."

References:

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This has baptisms and marriages performed by the ministers of the church. Many marriages were performed by justices of the peace, and so are not listed in these records. First Church marriage records are also online at http://dunhamwilcox.net/ct/new_lond_marr_1church.htm

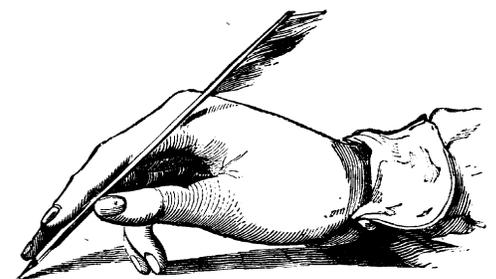
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The Women of New London in the Civil War

By Nancy H. Steenburg (Continued from the last issue...)

How did the volunteers know what they needed to produce? The Commission itself had gone to an expert to determine what it needed – those items that the army commissaries lacked. That expert was Florence Nightingale who had issued a scathing report of the necessary items lacking for the British soldiers in the Crimean War, less than 10 years earlier. Nightingale, perhaps better known for her nursing skills, was highly critical of the lack of preparation for the wounded and sick soldiers in that war. The British army provided uniforms, weapons, and ammunition. Nightingale noted the need for nearly everything else. Even healthy soldiers often had only a single uniform, with no spare underwear or socks. In times of battle few healthy men had the leisure to wash their clothes, and thus an injured soldier often had to lie for the duration of his stay in the camp hospitals clad in his filthy, bloody uniform.

Although it seems amazing that the U. S. government did not make the necessary preparations to clothe or even treat the wounded Union soldiers in the military hospitals, government officials were initially loath to rely on the intermittent or even inadequate aid that the country's women might supply. During the first critical year of the war, and even right up to its conclusion, it was a serious question whether such a regular service of the government such as supplying its military hospitals would not or should not be un-

dertaken more efficiently by some government agency. The women of New London, and the women of hundreds of communities, small and large, across the Northern states answered that they would fill the gap.

The ladies of New London took their tasks seriously. In January, 1862, the first month after organizing, the Society sent its first box sent to the Sanitary Commission in New York City, containing 60 articles of clothing. That shipment also included bedding, bandages, and reading materials. The next box, sent two weeks later, contained even more items.

The bi-weekly record of donations revealed that the industry and productivity of New London's women were prodigious. A box sent to Roanoke contained over 70 articles of clothing and various foodstuffs such as a dozen ginger sweets, 4 dozen chocolates, and 3 bottles of pickles. A shipment to Fortress Monroe included reading materials. Another shipment tried to improve the monotonous hospital fare with lemon crackers, sage, tea, cocoa, coffee, tobacco and pipes.

Some weeks the reports of the meetings listed the individual efforts of the attendees in very businesslike charts, showing how many mittens they had knitted, how many pairs of drawers they had cut and sewed, and how many shirts they had made. Other weeks' reports merely listed the impressive totals. During the first year of operation the ladies worked unstintingly, almost as if they were in a competition to provide the most items to the Sanitary Commission. With all that industry, the women maintained a vigorous fund-raising campaign. If the ladies were

all making and donating the various items, was the money necessary?

Women working as volunteer canvassers collected over \$105 in just the first two weeks of January, 1862. In all, the cash collectors amassed over \$300 in 1862. Aside from a "patriotic soiree" in mid-summer that raised \$115, the funds were the result of continuous canvassing by over three dozen women and girls who made meticulous reports of their success. In addition, the women solicited donations from their own churches. \$168 came from New London's churches following a Christmas special collection in December of 1862.

That notable industry continued almost unabated for nearly two years. In an age in which few middle-class women worked outside their homes or handled money, the New London Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society was in the business of raising and spending money. Over the period from January 1862 until July of 1865, the Society raised and spent over \$3,500. The contributions from individual donors ranged from as little as 5 cents to \$100.

If the women were making the shirts, sheets, bed jackets, slippers, socks, mittens, and whatever else the soldiers in hospitals might need, what were the kinds of items the women were buying? Were they merely paying for the raw materials for sheets, pillows, shirts, and pants? How were they spending the money they raised? Did the men who ran the businesses of New London benefit in any way from the industry of their women? Again, the meticulous record-keeping by mere females made it clear that the merchants and businessmen of New London made a handsome profit from the efforts of their womenfolk. The husbands of members

Women of New London in the Civil War *(continued)*

(Continued from page 5)

raked in over \$1,300 for materials, buttons, and sundries, all paid from the Ladies' Aid Society between January of 1862 and May of 1865. The increase of items purchased rather than made by hand perhaps reflected war weariness, but it may also have reflected that surpluses of raw materials or home-made foodstuffs that the women had at the start of the war had dwindled in the face of the outpouring of items they sent to the Sanitary Commission.

Belying the outdated idea that women did not have a head for business or the minutia of record keeping, the Society kept an incredibly detailed account of the items that the work groups produced at the Court House, as well as the women's donations of lint or linen for bandages, foodstuffs, reading materials, and sundry "delicacies." What was most notable about those delicacies was that the women donated such items, firm in the belief that some anonymous wounded soldier far from his home would be the beneficiary of their charity. Did the dozens of bottles of elderberry wine, ginger beer, and other assorted alcoholic beverages ever did make it to the soldiers?

(More to come in next issue.)

New and Renewed Members

(Continued from page 3)

Robert P. Hobron	Perris, CA
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Mr. G. F. Lane	Stonington
Gretchen Hatfield	Noank
Mike & Shawn Chapman	Archbald, PA
Barbara Thompson	Needles, CA
Eric Lehman	Hamden
Jean Chappell	Norwalk

Priceless? An Appraisal Event at the Garde Thursday Evening, 6 June, beginning at 6pm

Introducing a new annual event in cooperation with The Garde Arts Center on State Street in New London.

Bring your treasures to the first floor lobby of The Garde Arts Center to be evaluated by professional appraisers. \$5 Admission will be charged and there will be a \$5 fee for each item that you wish to have examined. There will be refreshments and drinks; come see what some of your friends and neighbors have unpacked out of their grandparents' trunks. (Think of this as a party with antiques.)

Appraisers with expertise in antiques, silver, textiles, furniture, and other specialties will be there

Stop in just to see, and make bids on, the wonderful silent auctions items (including some antiques) that will be available only to the participants of this event. All proceeds will benefit the New London County Historical Society and The Garde Arts Center.

Some of the appraisers scheduled:

Carolyn Yost – Stonington Antiques
Arthur Liverant – Colchester

Lives Revealed *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

life as a surveyor, or a captain in the militia, or a cooper, smith, or gravestone carver, just to mention a few of the many different ways in which Hempstead lived in his world.

Nevertheless, I know that many readers of this newsletter have searched through Hempstead's words looking for references to their own ancestors. Some of you may even feel you are inti-

mate with Hempstead having read his lines and between the lines he wrote so many years ago. If you want to get to know Hempstead or New London or New England better; if you want to see what a truly smart, talented, and articulate writer; obsessed researcher; and skilled narrative story teller can do with the resources left to us by Hempstead; you will want to read this book. You will want to read it simply to meet John Jackson.

Connecticut's Historic Gardens Day ~ Sunday, 23 June, 12 to 4pm

Please join us for the tenth annual celebration of fourteen historic gardens at locations across the state. At the Shaw Mansion, Connecticut Master Gardeners will share their skills and knowledge, there will be plants for sale, and of course, strawberry shortcake. \$5 admission charge.

Lon Outen	Kershaw, SC	David & Torrey Fenton	Oakdale
Deborah Donovan	New London	Mr. & Mrs. Brian Rogers	Mystic
Bernard Shea	New London	Karen Menzies	Waterford
Elizabeth Murphy	Niantic	Geoffrey Constantine	Mystic
Penny Parsekian & Geoff Kaufman	New London	Nancy P. Kane	Waterford
Genevieve Rafferty	New London	Tony Falcone	Cheshire
Judith A. Hicks	Mystic	Roy Bebee	Peyton, CO

Books available from the New London County Historical Society

<i>The Amistad Incident as Reported in the New London Gazette & General Advertiser.</i> (NLCHS)	\$5
<i>The History of the Amistad Captives.</i> (NLCHS) A reproduction of a pamphlet by JW Barber, 1840.	\$10
<i>Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900</i> by Barbara Brown and Dr. James Rose. (NLCHS) This republished book is a milestone in genealogical research of African Americans and Native Americans in New London County.	\$35
<i>The Diary of Joshua Hempstead 1711-1758.</i> (NLCHS) Revised 1999. Personal journal serves as fascinating and invaluable account of Connecticut life in early 18 th century.	\$75
<i>For Oil and Buggy Whips: Whaling Captains of New London County, Connecticut,</i> by Barnard Colby. Biographical sketches of local whaling captains document New London's role in this industry.	\$18
<i>Greetings from New London.</i> (NLCHS) Collection of early 20 th -century postcards from our archives.	\$10
<i>Life on a Whaler,</i> by Nathaniel W. Taylor. (NLCHS) Story of Taylor's two-year Antarctic voyage as physician aboard New London's <i>Julius Caesar</i> (1851-53).	\$25
<i>New London Goes to War - New London during World War II,</i> by Clark van der Lyke. Drawn from the records and correspondence of the New London City Council. (NLCHS)	\$11
<i>The Colonial Burying Grounds of Eastern Connecticut,</i> by James A. Slater. Fully illustrated with photographs, this book provides a description of and maps the burial grounds of eastern Connecticut.	\$40
<i>Common to this Country: Botanical Discoveries of Lewis & Clark,</i> by Susan Munger. Illustrated volume exploring plants discovered by Lewis and Clark on their westward expedition.	\$23
<i>The Day Paper,</i> by Gregory N. Stone. History of New London's award-winning daily newspaper.	\$30
<i>Steam Coffin: Captain Moses Rogers and the Steamship Savannah Break the Barrier,</i> by John Lawrence Busch. New London native son Moses Rogers and the first crossing of the Atlantic by a steam-powered vessel.	\$35
<i>Murder of Mayhem? - Benedict Arnold's New London, Connecticut Raid, 1781,</i> by Dr. Walter L. Powell. Excellent research in a small readable format.	\$10
<i>History of New London, Connecticut: from the first survey of the coast in 1612 to 1860,</i> by Frances Caulkins With a new introduction and a revised index 2007 (NLCHS).	\$60
<i>History of Norwich, Connecticut: from its possession by the Indians to the year 1866,</i> by Frances Caulkins With a new introduction and a new index 2009 (NLCHS).	\$60
<i>Prospero's America: John Winthrop, Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676</i> Excellent examination of New London's founder, from Walter Woodward, the Connecticut State Historian.	\$45
<i>"The Rockets' Red Glare:" The War of 1812 and Connecticut,</i> by Dr. Glenn S. Gordinier. Written to accompany the 2012 exhibition at the Lyman Allyn, this work is full of local connections to this war that shaped Connecticut (NLCHS).	\$18
<i>For Adam's Sake: A Family Saga in Colonial New England,</i> by Allegra di Bonaventura A new work exploring the lives and families of Joshua Hempstead and that of Adam Jackson, his slave, and other early New London families.	\$30

These *Images of America* titles available from NLCHS

<i>New London</i>	\$20
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<i>Reinventing New London</i>	\$20
<i>Naval Submarine Base New London</i>	\$20
<i>Lighthouses and Life Saving along the Connecticut and Rhode Island Coast</i>	\$20
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<i>Groton Revisited</i>	\$20
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