

WHO WE ARE

Board of Directors

Al Gorman
President

Bill Doheny
Vice-president

Barbara Hogan
Recording Secretary

Sam Becker
Treasurer

Martha Becker
Historian

Committee Chairs

Louise Brundage

Lois Casey

Betsy Gorman

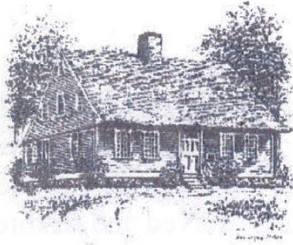
Stella Johnson

Ken Minkema

Joe Pepe

Virginia Zuhunft

The above streamlined list does not do justice to the Board members who wear more than one hat serving on many committees, assuming a variety of roles and contributing in numerous ways, making our Society an active and responsible community organization.
Help us, help Hamden.



THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SUMMER EDITION 2002

DEAR MEMBERS: Preservation of Hamden's architectural structures, the retention of the artifacts that constitute material culture and the safe keeping of our Town's landmarks are aspects of our Society's organizational mission. Our opening and maintaining the Dickerman House Museum serve to educate and elucidate the visitors about agricultural living in early 19th century America. These activities are as important as compiling and historic written accomplish by Hamden History Collectively they heritage and form a which the ages will judge the quality of the role we played in civilized society.



conserving the record which we operating the Library Room. reflect Hamden's factual base upon

To this end, the Society has encouraged the CT Historical Commission to lease the Farmington Canal Lockkeeper's House on upper Whitney Avenue to the Town of Hamden with the intention of using a portion of the building as a police substation and the remainder as a canal museum. This cooperative effort ensures preservation of an 1828 structure and works to serve the community in northern Hamden.

The Society spoke in favor of designating Tuttle Avenue as a scenic road and contacted the CT DOT about the Tuttle bridge design in hopes that its reconstruction would be in keeping with its rural setting.

With the cooperation of the Superintendent of Schools, the historic stone markers dedicated in 1935 to Hamden's First Selectmen who served from the 1880's through the 1930's were collected and relocated to the front of Hamden High School. Each of the surviving eight markers is inscribed with a First Selectman's name and years in office.

The Society is in contact with the Regional Water Authority concerning the future of the Elam Ives House, c.1790. It has been unoccupied for a few years and we fear that neglect will be the demise of this structure. Because of its construction, prominent location and connection to the Ives' family, this house has historic value and thus, it deserves present care and future preservation.

From saving the 1941 art deco tablet, to giving input to the Town Plan for Development and Conservation, the Society remains active according to its mission. Time will judge the fruits of our efforts, but without the effort there will be nothing to judge.

Hamden Heritage Vanishes

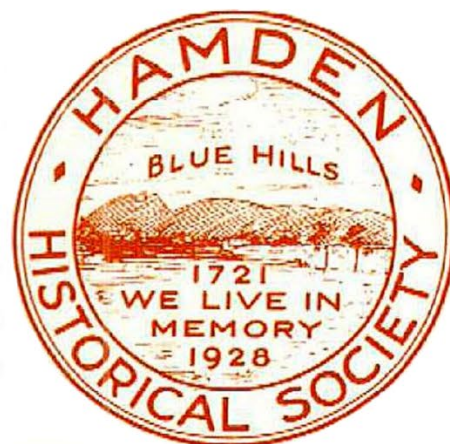
Since 1978, the *Ghost Parking Lot* has looked out at Dixwell Avenue in front of the Hamden Plaza. A curiosity to some, a statement concerning American culture to others or an early example of site-specific outdoor sculpture, Hamden's fleet of sunken, asphalt covered cars may vanish.

Created by James Wines, the original 20 cars have deteriorated over the years exposing the rusted skeletons of the remaining fifteen. The Plaza's owners plan to remove the *Ghost Parking Lot* in 2005, when a store's lease expires, so the site could be used for new construction. The owners have delayed the demise of the lot for two years; during which time the Hamden Arts Commission has sought funding to repair the sculpture and/or identify a possible owner (preferably a nonprofit organization) who would take responsibility for the preservation. Now, after 24 years, the *Ghost Parking Lot* will fade and Hamden will lose a special landmark.

The Hamden Plaza has a unique place in our history as it was the first shopping center in an early suburban setting, and once established, the owner added public art which served to decorate, annotate and educate. Once removed, this asphalt sculpture will remain for only so long in the public's memory and then recede into the past. It is unfortunate that commerce can not always accommodate art for its own sake because the goals of each are the same...to enrich.

UPDATE Since I wrote the words above, there is hope as you may have read in the newspapers of the *Ghost Lot's* being preserved and restored. Nothing is finalized as yet, but we must congratulate the current creative efforts. The Society has discussed being the nonprofit organization which would take ownership, but the responsibility is too great. We have written the Plaza's owners in support of the preservation efforts and we keep our fingers crossed awaiting final arrangements.

A GREAT BIG **THANK YOU!** to all Society members who returned their dues in a timely fashion; it shows you care. A special note of appreciation to those of you who sent the Society an extra donation above your membership; thirteen of you donated a total of \$300. Our Treasurer is especially pleased for this "baker's dozen" of donors.



THE J. D. HOUSE CLEAN UP

CHAPTER ONE The early morning threat of rain did not deter the hearty band of house cleaners and assorted laborers who descended upon the J.D. House for the annual cleaning. Enthusiastic spirits and sounds of chatter filled the house as Ginny Zuhunft, Lois Casey, Barbara Hogan and Betsy Gorman applied themselves to the task of preparing the house for its public opening. Amidst the floor mopping, vacuuming and washing, glass polishing, furniture dusting, and curtain rehanging, Ken Minkema worked scraping, spackling and prepping in order to repair the ceiling in the “spinning” room and wall in the “store” room. While in the gray mist outside, there seemed to be more planning, plotting and dreaming than heavy duty work, Al observed. However, the gutter was cleaned, clapboard repaired and Bob Zoni along with Joe Pepe replaced the sill plate in the tool shed. Day One ended before lunch, our J.D. House looked clean and shiny, and the crew was satisfied with a job well done.

CHAPTER TWO Alone, working in the quiet of the “old red house“, Ken returned a number of times during the next week to plaster, sand and paint. Unsupervised he did more work than the “outside three” did the first Saturday.

CHAPTER THREE Riding in, on the following sunny Saturday, was “Tractor “ Bill Doheny. Now, the real work could begin. Bill mowed the field behind the tool shed and placed a large stone (what’s a work session without moving rock around?) under a tree near the barn to prevent erosion. Joe, Al and Bill installed a drip hose in the herb gardens and a new cedar post for our climber. Meanwhile, Bob labored in the cool of the barn basement enclosing the future toilet facility. And all this before lunch. When 12:30 arrived, the tractor had to go home and it was time for the hot, tired crew to depart.

CHAPTER FOUR As any good home owner knows, the work is endless around a house. Our Society is fortunate to have such good volunteers who will do the extra work needed for our Dickerman House Museum.

EPILOGUE As early as six in the morning, on days with or without sunshine, our House Manager, Joe Pepe inspects the property, waters the gardens as needed and performs whatever maintenance is required. His living nearby is an asset to the Society and having such a volunteer is a treasure.

The J.D. House is in good hands...Thank You All.



photograph courtesy of Betsy Gorman

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Society continues to receive support from the SNET Community Connection Program; 5% of the total SNET All Distance billing for participants in the program goes to our Society. We have received \$25.95 to date. The Board appreciates the Society members who now are part of this no cost SNET contribution. If you wish to help us, please call SNET at **1-88-635-7638** and tell them you wish to participate in this no cost to you plan. Please refer to the Hamden Historical Society plan, **CODE #3062**, when you call.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBLINK

Thanks to the Hamden Library the Society is going online. The preliminary setup has been done and the final work will be completed in September. The Society and The History Room will have a web link on the home page of the Hamden Library website. A formal announcement of its debut will be in the fall edition of our newsletter. The public will soon be able to access several features about both the Society and the History Room’s ongoing efforts to preserve Hamden’s past.

NEWSLETTER

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 5512 HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518

Third Edition Available

The Hamden Historical Society has reprinted *HAMDEN: OUR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE*, the 208 page publication has over 150 photographs by Leland Robinson. This edition notes some of our architectural losses and records those listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Copies may be purchased in the Town Clerk's office, in the Hamden History Library within the Miller Library (Tues. 10-12 or Thurs. 1-4), at the Eli Whitney Museum or by calling 288-0017. The requested donation is \$20; this money supports the activities of your Society