



# THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER WINTER EDITION 2010

## WHO WE ARE

### Board of Directors

Al Gorman  
President

Ken Minkema  
Vice-president

Barbara Hogan  
Recording Secretary

Joe Pepe  
Treasurer

Sam Becker  
Asst. Treasurer

Ken Minkema  
Historian

### Committee Chairs

Louise Brundage

Lois Casey

John Carolla

Bill Doheny

Betsy Gorman

Stella Johnson

Joe Pepe

Virginia Zukunft

Dear Members,

The **ANTIQUÉ SHOW CRUISED TO VICTORY!** Despite a rainy start Saturday, the Giant Valley Antique Show capped a sunny Sunday with a victory for all sides. As the doors opened on the 48<sup>th</sup> annual show, sponsored by the Giant Valley Association of Antique Dealers, eager fans filled Hamden's Miller Cultural Complex. Until the closing bell late Sunday afternoon, visitors were treated to quality antiques, professional displays and superior kitchen fare.

Our remarkable Kitchen Staff, displaying cheer and efficiency, effortlessly served and satisfied hungry diners. The Saturday crew included: Betsy Pattison, Cathy Casolino, Craig Reynolds, Eric Lehman, Amy Nawrocki, Kim Casolino, Don Werner, and Betsy Gorman. Sunday's team featured: John and Marlene Carolla, Ken Minkema, Lois Casey, Louise Brundage, Barbara Hogan, Bob Zoni, as well as returning members, Betsy Gorman and Don Werner. What a line up!



We must also credit the back-up Society members: Joyce Gilbert, Lorraine Velardi, Barbara Hamilton, Lori Minkema, and Virginia Zukunft. They contributed by baking, cooking, and donating to support the victory. The stats reveal the Kitchen earned a net profit of \$737, and the donation from the GVAAD was \$2300. Well played!

With great appreciation,  
Al Gorman

The above list does not do justice to the Board members who wear more than one hat serving on many committees, making our Society an active and responsible community organization. Help us, help Hamden.

A view of Old Peck Place before renovation (rear view)



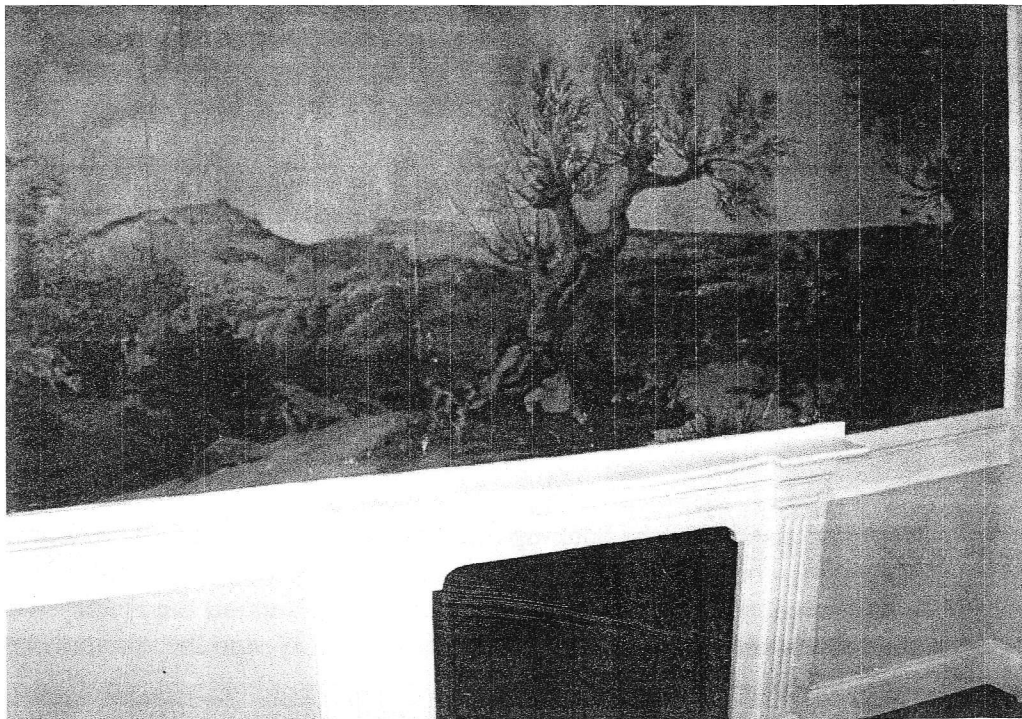
## The Old Peck Place Reborn

The Old Peck Place on Todd Street has long been a fixture in Mt. Carmel, going back to the eighteenth century. In recent years, when the Peck family no longer resided there, the structure has gone through tough times, lying vacant for a while. In the past couple of years, however, the Old Peck Place has been reborn as part of an interesting adaptability project.

Ravenswood Homes purchased the Peck Place and adjoining properties to the north and south of Todd Street and created Trailside, a community for active mature citizens, and has built facilities around the historic structure, incorporating them as office space and a community center. Restoration has been meticulously undertaken, with an eye towards making the Peck Place livable for modern residents, while maintaining original lines and features.

What we know today as the Old Peck Place is actually an assemblage of at least three different structures. The east wing, a traditional Cape Cod-style house, was constructed by Dimon Roberts in about 1795. In 1817, Joseph Hough established a tannery on the site. Then, in 1826, Henry Peck (1834-61) purchased the property for his shoe manufacture. Indeed, the west wing of the Peck Place is actually the cobblers' shop of Peck and Alfred Hitchcock, where, tradition has it, they produced up to 700 pairs of shoes per year. The middle portion, an example of Greek Revival architecture, was originally built by Titus Munson, circa 1795, nearby on Whitney Avenue, and later owned by Baptist preacher Lorenzo "Hallelujah" Peck. This middle portion was moved into its current location in 1936, and joining wings were added to make the three structures one.

One feature of especial interest in the downstairs parlor of the middle portion is the mural wallpaper portraying a hunting scene. This French Zuber wallpaper can be dated to c.1841; a similar example is found in the home of President Martin Van Buren in Kinderhook, New York.



The French wallpaper mural in the downstairs parlor of the Titus Munson section of the Old Peck Place



In November 2009, our Historian, Ken Minkema made a presentation to the residents of Trailside Village, a development by Ravenswood Homes located on Todd Street in Mt. Carmel. The project incorporated the lovingly renovated Old Peck Place into the newly constructed residential community.

Professor Minkema, besides sharing the information on the previous page about the Old Peck Place, used slides from the Society's archives to illustrate the history of early Mt. Carmel industry, especially the Ivesville and Axerod Factories.

Shown on the back of this newsletter is the Old Peck Place after the renovation.

This sign hung outside for many years



### **HAMDEN HISTORY LIBRARY ROOM OPENS FOR ITS 25<sup>th</sup> YEAR**

The Hamden History Library Room opened this past September for its 25<sup>th</sup> season of research on the upper floor at the Miller Memorial Library. Our mission is to collect, preserve, and make available historical materials relating directly and significantly to Hamden. We continue to be the only certified repository of Hamden's history.

Our Library Room serves hundreds of patrons each year who either visit our archives or who request research online. Patrons seek information on many different subjects: historical sites, government documents, vital records, notables, genealogy, rare photographs and maps, civic associations, school records and other such matters.

This year our cataloguers Ginnie Dowd and Phyllis Pepe have catalogued, indexed and stored all of our late Municipal Historian Martha Becker's enormous collection of research notes on such topics as historic homes, ancient notables, historic sites, land development, genealogies, neighborhoods, schools, and other subjects in Hamden's long history. They have also indexed our six complete volumes of the Hamden Chronicle, noting all the relevant articles that supplement our archived material. Since our manuscript boxes are filled with thousands of pages of material, Ginnie and Phyllis are currently re-organizing our collection to allow better storage for these documents. These projects require attention and great care and their work benefits all who seek research.

We welcome Historical Society members' inquiries on any Hamden History subject. If you wish to contact us, please email either one of these addresses: [hhs@hamdenlibrary.org](mailto:hhs@hamdenlibrary.org) or [joepepe1@comcast.net](mailto:joepepe1@comcast.net). Our collection is here for you to study.

Article by Joe Pepe, Archivist



## ***NEWSLETTER***

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 5512, HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518