



THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SUMMER EDITION 2011

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Dear Society Members...Some Notes & News:

Thank you for returning your envelopes with your 2011-12 membership dues. We appreciate your continued support, generosity, and prompt action. In celebration of that support, we are inviting you to:

A wine tasting at the Dickerman House Museum

Sunday, August 28th, 2:00 to 4:00 PM

On hand, will be our "in house" wine experts, Eric Lehman and Amy Nawrocki, authors of A History of Connecticut Wine, who will share their expertise of "vineyards in your backyard" and discuss some CT varieties of wine. The event is free for members. Please mark your calendars. Come and enjoy!

While your calendar is open, please also mark, **Sunday, September 11th**, for a poetry reading and discussion with author and educator, Amy Nawrocki, at the Cider Mill Barn, 3 to 5 PM. Refreshments will be served. Remember seating will be limited to about twenty-five. This event is free and open to the public.

Batter Up! In May, the Society held its annual meeting at the Miller Senior Center. Officers were elected and a presentation was given by author, editor, and sportswriter, Don Harrison. While popcorn and Cracker Jacks were served, Mr. Harrison showed photos from his book, Connecticut Baseball: The Best of the Nutmeg State, Published by The History Press, and discussed his CT All Star Team. Such CT greats as Mo Vaughn, Jimmy Piersall, and Brad Ausmus were included on the team. We thank Mr. Harrison for taking us "out to the ball game," and Betsy and Barbara for providing the refreshments after the ninth inning. Did you know that there were two Hamden born players who played in the major leagues: Henry Gruber (1880's and 90's) and Ed Wilson (1930's)?

HAMDENHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM Our Society now has a website thanks to Eric Lehman.

Thanks to Lois Casey and Nancy Faughnan, our educational docents, who opened the Dickerman House this April and May for many Hamden third graders so they could experience 18th century living.



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.

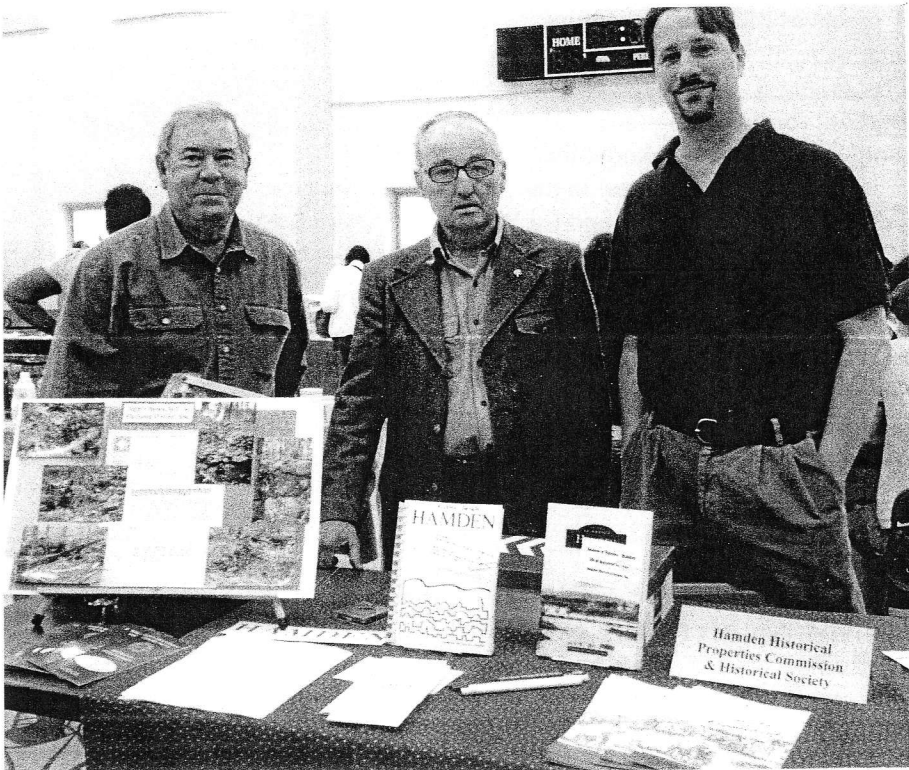
**SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 19TH and 20TH
ANNUAL ANTIQUE SHOW**

Jepp Brook Industrial Site

Located near Sleeping Giant State Park along Whitney Avenue (Route 10) are the remains of two 19th century factories which manufactured parts for New Haven's carriage making industry. The Mount Carmel Axle Works and the Charles Brockett Carriage Spring Shop produced carriage components for the companies that assembled the carriages in New Haven. These factories were known for their innovative designs and improvements in manufacturing. The Mount Carmel Axle Works was designated a State Archaeological Preserve in 2001 for its significance to local and state industrial heritage.

An equally important site was discovered by Ethan Minkema with very visible remains of the foundations of a grist mill and saw mill, as well as a wheel pit, headrace, and two dams. Fortunately, the Town of Hamden owns the property. The Hamden Historic Properties Commission, with support from our Society and the RWA, obtained a grant for a study of the site. In 2008, the Jepp Brook Industrial Site was also listed on the CT State Register of Historic Places and designated as a State Archaeological Preserve. Located on River Road in Mt. Carmel, the site will be marked with a sign, and an informational brochure has been published. It is available in the Town Clerk's office, at the Dickerman House, the Hamden History Library, and the Lock-keeper's House Canal Museum.

Early Hamden industrialists took advantage of the power of the Mill River and constructed mills and factories along its banks.



Earth Day

The Society participated in Hamden's Earth Day celebration at the Hamden Middle School. We had information available, books for sale, and answered questions.

Pictured are: Al Gorman, Bill Doheny, and Eric Lehman. (L-R)

Dickerman House and Grounds Clean Up Crew

(L to R) Bob Zoni, Eric Lehman,
Amy Nawrocki, Kim Casolino, Bill
Doheny, Barbara Hogan, Al Gorman.
(Photograph by Betsy Gorman)



THANKS for the help.

Barn Grants Our Society applied for and received a Barn Grant from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation to conduct a conditions assessment of the Maselli Barn c. 1890 located on Gilbert Avenue. As well, we worked with the Friends of Brooksvale Park to obtain a second Barn Grant for conditions assessment of the c.1900 barn at the park. Both reports will provide the Town an analysis of the structures, information concerning recommendations for preservation, and a list of repair priorities.

Summer Reading An excerpt from The Old Mount Carmel Parish: Origins and Outgrowths by George Sherwood Dickerman (b. 1843), which was published by Yale University Press in 1925. Reverend Dickerman was one of nine children who grew up in his father's house on Whitney Avenue not far from the Mount Carmel Congregational Church. He writes in his chapter on Personal Recollections:

So long as farming was the chief occupation and the lands throughout the town were under cultivation, the people were widely scattered and most of their homes were somewhat apart from other homes. Each home with its several buildings was the salient feature of the farm on which it stood. All the belongings of the farm centered in it as the headquarters from which the directions for whatever was undertaken were given, and to which the products of every sort were brought. To live on farm then meant living there quite distinctly. The owner and his family did the work, and the work indoors and outdoors there was very little let up from one season to another. To pay for this, the farm gave the family their support and whatever else they could make out of it. But the support was the main thing. A farmer bought very little; he raised what was required. He made little use of the money and ordinarily had very little that he could use. Even in marketing his products, he took most of their value in other things that were wanted on his farm or by his family.

Unlike most other people, the farmer was largely independent of markets. His house was stocked from garret to cellar with the things which were necessary for food and clothing, while the wood yard held an abundant supply of fuel. His herds and poultry furnished the meat for his table; much of the pork and beef having been salted down in barrels, or cured by smoking, so that it was ready at hand when wanted. The dairy gave cheese, butter, cream, and milk at all times. The garden provided fresh vegetables, berries, and grapes in their seasons; and in the autumn a surplus of cabbages, beets, carrots, and onions was stored in the cellar for winter use....The harvests of wheat and rye made the supply of flour. Buckwheat was in demand for buckwheat cakes, and cornmeal was a staple for hasty pudding and johnnycake....Apples, pears, and berries were dried to keep them from spoiling....

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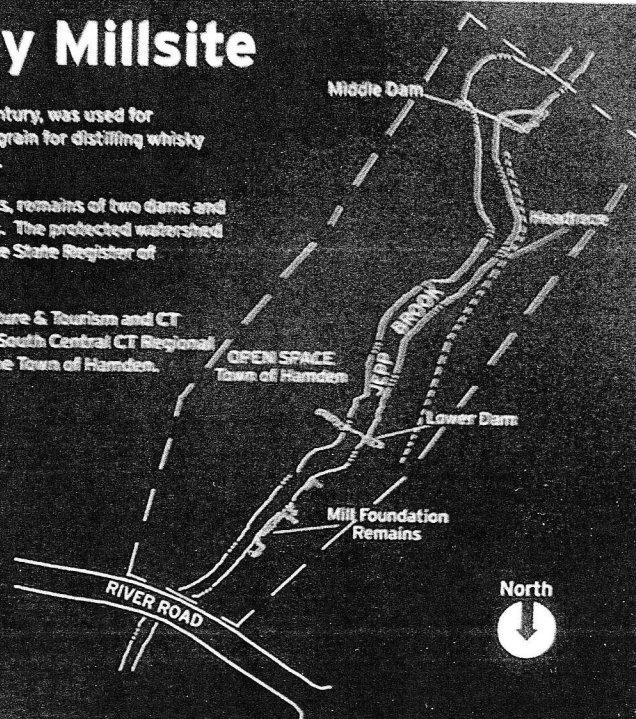
Jepp Brook Early Millsite

This early industrial millsite, dating to the late 18th century, was used for gristmilling, sawmilling, pressing cider and preparing grain for distilling whisky and "country gin". Activity ceased by the late 1800's.

Visible are two foundations, a wheel pit, retaining walls, remains of two dams and a water race leading from the far dam to the wheel pit. The protected watershed area is owned by the Town of Hamden and listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

This project was funded by the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism and CT Trust for Historic Preservation with support from the South Central CT Regional Water Authority, the Hamden Historical Society and the Town of Hamden.

Hamden Historic Properties Commission



The map illustrates the Jepp Brook Early Millsite. It shows the course of Jepp Brook flowing from the top right towards the bottom left. Key features labeled include the Middle Dam at the top, a Headrace connecting it to the Lower Dam further down. The Mill Foundation Remains are shown as a cluster of dashed lines near the lower dam. A dashed line outlines the OPEN SPACE owned by the Town of Hamden. At the bottom, RIVER ROAD is shown crossing the brook. A North arrow is located in the bottom right corner.