



The Preservationist

Spring/Summer 2008

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The Preservationist

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Landmarks Archives



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Custom House Museum

Susan Tamulevich, Museum Director

New London Landmarks congratulates the custom House Maritime Museum on their 25th Anniversary and the 175th anniversary of Robert Mills' grand structure on Bank Street. Overseeing maritime activity along the Thames River, the building has been witness to every significant event in New London's history.



The United States Custom House, 150 Bank Street
Architect: Robert Mills, 1833

Photo: Tom Hahn

We also welcome new Museum Director, Susan Tamulevich to New London.

Six weeks into my tenure as Director at the Custom House Maritime Museum, I'm beginning to learn a thing or two about the city: New London is a rare bird—full of character and replete with characters. a place that's surprising on a daily basis—a working port with a friendly downtown.

Take The United States Custom House—New London's "Gem on the Waterfront," as its architect Robert Mills put it. What a remarkable structure: a noble granite and brick neo-classical edifice, with ceilings that are a web of intersecting vaults.

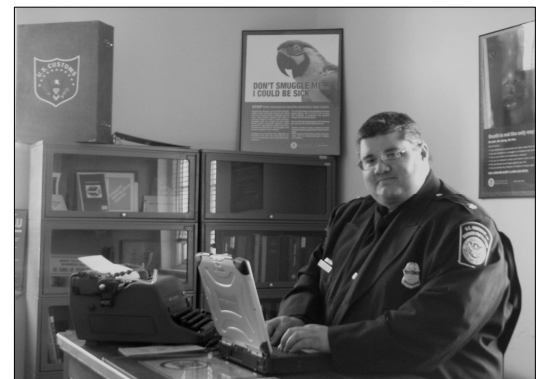
The building still maintains a customs office—a workplace which is, in fact, the oldest continuously-operating customs office in the country. Our Port Director, Nicholas E. Hanke, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (now that U.S. Customs has been incorporated into that behemoth), sees to it that our Contraband Collection exhibits his latest prizes: seized objects made from endangered species (think stuffed sea turtle, carved ivory, reptile skins), an errant foreign beetle found in a pineapple, drug paraphernalia, phone versions range from a Rolex watch, to Beanie Babies!

Nick is an unusual guy; he is also typical of what is so endearing about people who participate in this

museum: they care about New London's

living maritime traditions, be they customs, fishing, sailing, the Coast Guard, the Merchant Marine. Nick Hanke knows his history, he's proud to carry on the tradition, and he's consciously working to preserve the rich history of the U. S. Customs Service.

At the Custom House, history is not just what happened here in past centuries, but also how that past shapes who we are and what New London is today.



Port Director Nicholas E. Hanke in New London's U. S. Customs Office



Meeting room for the Jabboom Club in the vaulted cellars of the Custom House.

Continued on page 2

Custom House Museum

continued from page 1



Recently I discovered a video of the Opening Day of the Museum, from December, 1988. It showed one of New London's greatest supporters, Custom House Museum founder Lucille Showalter, explaining what mattered most to her about the design of the building. Although the country was still very young, she said, in 1833 when construction on the Custom House began, the building was designed with a spirit of great optimism. Architect Robert Mills

wanted it to be fireproof; he built it of great blocks of local granite. It was a building, she said, that was built to *endure*—a testament to the public's belief in the future of this young country.

This year marks both the 25th anniversary of the founding of the New London Maritime Society, (a group formed to preserve the Custom House), and the 175th anniversary of the building. At the museum we still feel the optimism Robert Mills infused into the structure. Come, visit the Custom House. I bet you will feel Mills' spirit, too!

The Maritime Museum is open for visitors Tuesday—Sunday 1:00—5:00
By Appointment call: 860-447-2501



Newly expanded ground floor exhibit room overlooking the waterfront

newlondonlandmarks.org

It's still a work-in-progress, but Landmarks new web site is on its way and will be on line by the middle of May. Check it out and contact NLL with your comments. Perhaps this will create an easier way for us to hear from you on a wide variety of preservation issues — for preservation is finally receiving state-wide recognition about the economic benefits of preserving our resources. See *Going Green* on page 7.

Plans for the site content reflect New London's history as well as current activities. We have been searching our files for historic photos and have secured photographer Tom Hahn's permission to use some of his wonderful architectural photography on the site.

The Frank Loomis Palmer Fund and The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism have funded the development of newlondonlandmarks.org



This is not exactly what our final Home Page design will be, but the top photo clearly shows the wide open spaces of the original Parade.

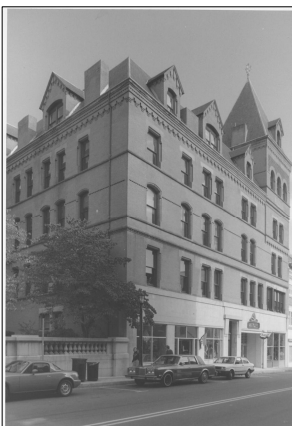
Directors' Report

Sandra Kersten Chalk

DON'T MISS OUR CALENDAR on the last page; there are many events planned for the spring, summer and fall this year, the theme is *Walk New London!*

Our focus is on New London's buildings — from a small, insignificant fisherman's cottage, built somewhere in the 1700s — currently in the midst of a fascinating restoration on Robinson Street . . .

. . . to the fine architecture on State Street, the pride of many wealthy New Londoners who planned and paid for their design and construction in the 1800s. These men, whose wealth was derived from whaling, shipbuilding and industrialization in New London, gave back to the city handsome buildings designed by leading architects of their day. They took tremendous pride in their city — and we hope you do as well.



Harris Building

A SPECIAL EVENT for anyone who would like to see "inside" a building. Really, down to the mortise and



tenon of the earliest structure and view the changes through the years as a small fisherman's shack was enlarged . . . and moved . . . and moved again to its present loca-

tion at 25 Robinson Street.

Richard Humphreville purchased this house at its location on Blackhall Street and received Landmarks Rescue Award in 2005 when he moved it to its new site, saving the structure from demolition. In its present state of reconstruction, visitors will be given a tour of the "insides" and trace the many changes in building techniques and materials that have occurred throughout the years.

I recommend making reservations for the tours which will be limited to five people at a time. In its current

state of reconstruction, Richard will demonstrate how the house was first built as a fisherman's shack, improved, moved, and moved again.

Refreshments will be served. We are planning a few additional activities for Saturday, July 19 — stay tuned for details!

Timeline for the house:

- 19th century, Paymasters House at Fort Trumbull
- 20th century, c. 1900 moved to Blackhall Street
- 21st century, moved to Robinson Street and received Landmarks Rescue Award in 2005

PEQUOT COLONY LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT. Defeated. We were very disappointed when City Council refused to accept the report from the Pequot Colony Study Committee to create a second Local Historic District in New London. The majority of homeowners, in the percentage required by State Statute, approved the plans. The idea behind a Local Historic District (LHD) is to preserve a neighborhood at a particular moment in time. It seeks to protect the specific architectural features represented in each building according to the date of and style of construction. Nationally, LHD's tend to preserve property values and ensure maintenance of each property within the district. Starr Street is the only LHD in New London today.

MEMBERSHIP IN NEW LONDON LANDMARKS is an indication that the organization is on track with the interests of the community. While NLL focuses on New London, we welcome residents of local communities to join NLL to learn about New London's cultural and historic resources and long history as the commercial center of the region.

This edition of *The Preservationist* is being sent to people who are not current members in the hope you will enjoy the stories, make note of our Calendar of Events, and consider joining New London Landmarks.

A copy of the **Thames River Heritage** Summer Calendar is also enclosed which lists many events throughout the region that encourage interest in maritime history.

The more you learn about the people, places and events of the area, the greater appreciation you will have for this wonderful corner of Connecticut.

Join New London Landmarks today! Thank you.

2008 Membership—as of 5/1/08

Our members are very important to Landmarks. Your membership represents support of all our programs, planned to inspire community interest in New London's historic roots and present appearance. Our Walking Tours this season will emphasize the fine architecture of our beautiful downtown buildings and the domestic architecture of our neighborhoods. ***Thank you for your membership and I hope you will join us for our various spring, summer, and fall activities.***

Individual

Barbara Ailing
John Philip Anthony
Janice Mallove Balkan
Vincentia Belbruno
Marvin Berger
Carol Booth
Katherine Brossard
Carolyn M. Condon
David Condon
Carol Corbeil
Bill Cornish
Barbara Dixon
Kevin Doyle
Fern Drutman
Josephine Esposito
Edith Geer
Richard Gipstein
Jennifer Hillhouse
Carmelina Kanzler
Barbara Kil
Peter Kreckovic
Hildred H. Lasser
Rita Lentine
Carolyn Leuze
Rose Longo
Helen McGuire
Kathleen McGuire
Dorothy Miller
Robert Nye
Joy Orlando
Elvira Penrose
Robert Richter
Peter Roper
Hubert Ryan

Marion Sandalls
Louisa Shakkour
Sons of the American Revolution
Marie Spencer
Kieth R. Stone
Archie Swindell
Elizabeth Whitley

Family

Wadonna Ashcraft
Garrett & Victoria Brennan
Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Callahan
Rodney & Sandra Chalk
Mr. & Mrs. Russell DeMarco
John & Laurie Deredita
J.D. & Kathy Diaz-Saavedra
Deborah Donovan
Linda & Tom English
Timothy & Paul Foley
Elizabeth & Joshua Friedman
Robert Hauschild & Margaret Palmer
Paul & Carla Henschel
John & Anne Hunziker
Carl & Winifred Josephson
Kevin & Amanda Lester
Lance Mayer & Gay Myers
Bud McAllister & Diane Rumssottel
James McGuire
Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Moalli
Edward Murphy & Doris Edmond
Deborah McCann
Colin J. Revill
Franklin & Suzanne Risley
Helen Sandalls & Roger Beers
Ellen & Rob Scala

Pat & Tod Schaefer
Christopher & Rebecca Steiner
Wilfred Thompson
Russell & Fran Vocalina
Michael Wright & Scott Ross
Barbara Zabel & Thomas Couser

Contributor

Nathan & Patricia Belcher
Stephen Joncus
Mayson Moore-Price & James Price
Susan Munger
Abigail Van Slyck & Mitch Favreau

Patron

Kathleen & Frederick Barrett
Lloyd & Sandy Beachy
Bruce & Ellen Cummings
Anna Deveau
Heather & Richard Grigsby
William & Donna Stamm
Philip & Sherry Turner
Wick & Rodi York

Corporate/Business

Barun Basu Associates
Cole-Chu & Cipparone, LLC
Lori Hopkins Real Estate
J. Solomon, Inc.
Yankee Remodeler

Other

Dr. David Hayes
Edgar C. Forest
Marian Shilstone

Membership Information

Our Annual Membership drive begins at our Annual Meeting in February. Our membership year is April 1st through March 31st. Benefits of membership include receiving copies of The Preservationist, postcards and mailings about special events and, most importantly, support for our on-going work to preserve and protect New London's historic urban landscape.

Of course, we are always happy to welcome new members at any time to join in our preservation efforts for New London.

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, please join today!

Individual: \$25

Family: \$35

Contributor: \$50 - \$75

Patron: \$100 & above

Corporate: \$200

Historic Plaque Application

**DAVID BISHOP
HOUSE**



c1796

If your New London home/building is at least 50 years old, it may qualify to receive an historic marker listing its date and original owner. The information gathered in this process aids in neighborhood preservation efforts.

Our volunteer title researchers study land, tax and water records, historic maps, and city directories to establish your building's first owner and date of its construction.

The researchers also welcome any oral history or copies of old documents relating to your building that you may have. Please allow at least 16 - 20 weeks for completion of the research and delivery of the durable, hand-lettered, sealed hardwood plaque.

PLAQUE ADDRESS _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

DAY PHONE _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

LEGAL OWNER (IF DIFFERENT) _____

APPROXIMATE DATE PURCHASED BY CURRENT OWNER _____ APPROXIMATE AGE OF PROPERTY _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

MEMBERSHIP STATUS: Yes ☐ No ☐

PRICE OF PLAQUE: \$200.00 Non-member \$175.00 Members

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required with this application. Balance is due upon completion.

Historic Plaques Completed:

**Richard Douglass
1801
77-79 Green Street
Restoration Award
Winner — 2008**

**Benjamin S. Harris
Anna L. Harris
1898
17 Pacific Street**

New London Landmarks Life Members

Jeffrey Anderson, Mary C. Anderson, Charlotte Barnum, Lawrence Hall, Anthony Pero, Dale Plummer,
Mrs. William C. Ridgeway, Jr., Mary Ann Root, Sarah Ryan, John & Sarah Steffian, Carl Stoner,
Mr. & Mrs. John M. Timken, Wendy Wachter

Our Mission Statement:

"... To promote the preservation and development of the entire urban environment of New London, Connecticut, including significant individual structures, streetscapes, neighborhoods and open spaces."

New London Landmarks Photo Archives

Heather Tichenor, Archivist

In the five months that I've been working as archivist for New London Landmarks, I've been slowly acquainting myself with all the varied resources this office has to offer. One of the biggest surprises is how many photographs we have in our archives and how many of them offer fascinating glimpses of New London's past. Luckily, we've just received a grant (from the Bodenwein Benevolent Fund) that is providing equipment to scan, sort, and catalog our photos. This will allow us to finally see just how large our photo collection is and, hopefully, lead to some new and interesting uses of these historic artifacts.



Eldredge & Whaley Choice Groceries

"Times Change" story in The Day was undated, but research has now established a time frame for this busy intersection

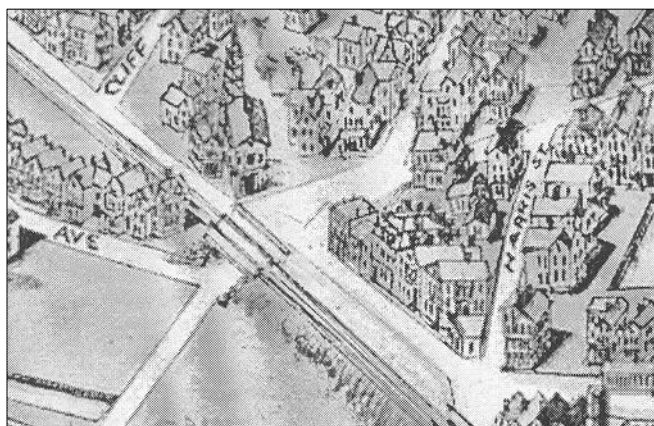
One of the photos that recently caught my eye, as I was sorting through some uncatalogued material, was an unusually clear photo of a grocery store that, judging from the horses and carts, was from the turn of the 20th century or earlier. Using a magnifying glass, I was able to read the sign on the side of the cart, and see that it said "Eldredge & Whaley Choice Groceries and Meats, 90 Howard St." After checking our Howard Street file, I discovered that we already had almost the exact same photo from a "Times Change" story in The Day, but with a different grocer – Albert Peck.



Albert Peck's Grocery Store

Using city directories, I found that Albert Peck ran the grocery store at 90 Howard (the corner of Howard and Willetts Ave.) first, from 1893 to 1897; his son Charles ran it for a couple years.

Eldredge & Whaley took over in 1900. The street numbers changed in 1904, and 90 Howard became 245 Howard. This means that our photo can be definitely dated ca 1900-1904.



The intersection of Willetts Avenue and Howard Street was once a busy commercial intersection as seen in this 1911 map. Pequot Avenue went under the railroad bridge and connected to Willetts Avenue and Howard Street.

The third photo, sadly too common for New London, shows what 245 Howard Street looks like today – an empty lot. The intersection of Howard and Willetts is now a rotary near Pfizer. It appears that 245 Howard Street spent most of the 20th century as a vacant building, and during the Shaw's Cove redevelopment, was finally torn down sometime between 1976 and 1980. Longtime New Londoners will also remember a similar fate – demolition – for Hughies, the beloved restaurant that was just a block away on Howard Street.



Going Green

Sandra Kersten Chalk

"When you strip away the rhetoric, preservation is simply having the good sense to hold on to things that are well designed, that link us with our past in a meaningful way, and that have plenty of good use left in them."

- - Richard Moe
President, National Trust for Historic Preservation

A revolution is sweeping the country in big cities and small towns everywhere – or, at least in those communities who recognize the imperatives of "smart growth" and "new urbanism." These are the catch words in large and small communities who are meeting the 21st century with open minds and a willingness to evaluate the realities of changing climate, the high costs of all energy options, and a variety of environmental issues including the most basic concerns for clean air and clean water.

Preservationists have been "going green" for many years; going green is all about lowering the impact that you, your activities, and your home and business have on the environment. It's about re-using, recycling, and reducing what is needed in the first place, and that is the essence of historic preservation.

NEW URBANISM

And, what is "New Urbanism?" Check out their web site at www.newurbanism.org. Their nine principles reach out to all aspects of life within any community, from a single building to a large neighborhood. The goal is to help communities evolve into places where people want to live and work with convenient transportation, walkable neighborhoods and a close proximity to necessary retail and services. Bike trails, parks and open space closely linked within residential communities create a quality of life that will "enrich, uplift and inspire the human spirit."

New Urbanist concepts encourage mixed-use projects that combine shops, offices, apartments and homes within a neighborhood to attract a diversity of people; a mix of ages, income levels, cultures and races. Cost savings in a mixed-use development include use of parking facilities, lower costs of utilities due to the compact nature of the design, and more leasable square footage.

For the urban environment, the major thrust of New Urbanism is to encourage infill development in city centers where a unified transportation center, existing retail and businesses unite with increasing residential options to revitalize the inner city.

SMART GROWTH

Smart growth incentives in Connecticut begin with 1000 Friends of Connecticut, a state-wide organization working on policy matters in the state to win support for smarter, more sustainable, more responsible growth.

According to 1000 Friends, Smart Growth policies promote investment in growth that will create a vibrant, diverse business sector, vital city and town centers, encourage brownfield redevelopment, focus on transit-oriented development* and create compact, walkable communities.

As the legislative session comes to a close this spring, 1000 Friends is encouraging legislators to:

- Promote policies that rebalance local and state revenues and reduce the pressure on localities to grow their grand lists
- Work to create a transparent, fair system for distributing state funds to localities for municipal services
- Advance the full funding of the Education Cost Share formula & Payment in Lieu of Taxes grant, and increase funding of special education
- Advocate for a stream of funding to encourage responsible growth initiatives within and between municipalities

This is a real grass roots organization with a variety of community-oriented ways of creating interest in and concern for smart growth initiatives. Contact them at www.1000friends-ct.org to learn how to become part of the solution, not part of the problems facing issues of growth. When the legislature comes into session next fall, they will be working for all of us who care about **"preserving, conserving and growing smart."**

* **TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT** is part of a bonding package in the State for transportation related development plans that will enhance economic benefits to local communities. New London's Union Station has been selected as one of the sites for a state funded pilot program.

Sources:

- Northeast Office Staff Report, National Trust for Historic Preservation, October 2007 – February 2008
- New Urbanism "Principles of New Urbanism"
- Main Street Navigator, Vol.8, No.2 Spring 2008
- 1000 Friends of Connecticut
- Connecticut State Legislature Bill #1502

NEW LONDON LANDMARKS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS – SPRING, SUMMER, FALL

WALK NEW LONDON!

MAY:

Thursday, May 8

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks - 11:00 am & 2:00 pm.
Start at Union Station. \$15.

JUNE:

Saturday, June 14

HISTORIC BANK STREET, Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am. Start from Soldiers & Sailors Monument. \$5 contribution.

JULY:

Friday, July 4

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am & 2:30 pm.
Start from Union Station. \$15.

Saturday, July 19, (rain date Sunday July 20)

One House - 300 Years of Life

Current Location: 25 Robinson Street

Tour Richard Humphreys's 18th century fisherman's cottage, 19th century Paymaster's House, 21st century restoration.

See further information on page 3 of this newsletter.

Tickets \$20.00 - Reservations Recommended:

New London Landmarks 860-442-0003

AUGUST:

Friday, August 1

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am & 2:30 pm. Start from Union Station. - \$15.

Saturday, August 2

Pequot Historic District walking tour: Start from Pequot Chapel, Montauk Avenue at Chapel Street. 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Led by Sally Ryan, City Historian. Enjoy refreshments on a Pequot Colony front porch. - \$15.

SEPTEMBER:

Thursday, Sep. 25

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am.
Start from Union Station, - \$15.

Saturday, Sept. 27

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am.
Start from Union Station, - \$15.

OCTOBER:

Friday, October 17 & Sunday, October 19

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ON STATE STREET – Walking Tour led by New London Landmarks. 10:30 am.
Start from Union Station, - \$15.

NOVEMBER:

Saturday, November 1

Guided Tour the Antientest Buriall Ground. Details TBA.

The Preservationist Spring/Summer 2008



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