



The Lisbon Quarterly

A Newsletter for Lisbon Residents



Colonial American Christmas

By Marcia Shafer, Town Historian

The New England Colonies outlawed Christmas celebrations and likened the celebrating to pagan rituals. The Puritans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Quakers refused to celebrate the holiday.

During the 1650's, Massachusetts fined people five shillings for each offences of feasting, refraining from work, or any other activity associated with the holiday. At the Assembly of Connecticut during this same period, residents were prohibited from reading the Book of Common Prayer, the keeping of Christmas and saints days, the making of mince pies, the playing of cards or performing on Musical instruments. These Connecticut statutes were repealed early in the nineteenth century.

In the mid 1700's there is documentation from Colonial Williamsburg indicating that on Christmas Eve the Church was decorated with garlands of holly, ivy, mountain laurel, and Mistletoe which were hung from the church roof, walls, pillars, and galleries. Scented flowers, rose petals, and pungent herbs were scattered to provide a pleasant scent and used as an alternative form of incense.

Christmas season celebrations usually started on December 25th and with some religions and churches, it continued to February 2nd. This cycle of celebration is a commemoration of the Infancy narratives found in the Gospels of Saint Luke and St. Matthew. There was much celebration with food, family, and balls.

Traditional carols, contemporary hymns, singing and dancing were abundant during the Christmas holiday

season. In the southern states, parties, hunts, feasts, and church services were adult activities. Colonial Christmas was a holiday for adults. It was noted that no eighteenth century sources highlighted the importance of children at Christmas time. The emphasis for Children did not come about until the mid 1800's.

The tradition of gift giving was in Colonial America with a twist. People gave gifts to their dependents, servants, apprentices, or children. People did not give gifts to their superiors. The recipient most likely received one special treasure—a small book or sweets.

As immigrants came to America and brought their traditions with them for the Christmas holiday season, the celebrations and traditions became more wide spread and accepted in the New World. I wonder what Christmas decorations and celebrations in your home could be traced back to traditions from another country?

May your holiday be special with family and friends.

I would appreciate any pictures or newspaper clippings, or magazine articles documenting Lisbon history. I am willing to copy them and return them to you. You can reach me by calling me at 860-376-8108 or emailing me lisboncthistorian@yahoo.com.

Christmas Tree Pick-up

Christmas tree pick-up will take place the second week in January. Have trees curbside by Monday, January 9, 2012.

✓ HELP WANTED

Wanted...Lisbon residents, no experience required, available one evening a month. If you are interested in maintaining and/or improving the current high standard of living and highly rated educational system that elected officials and volunteers have worked diligently over the years to create and preserve, please forward a letter-of-interest to Thomas Sparkman, First Selectman, Town Hall 1 Newent Road.

Your help is urgently needed. Currently there are vacancies on the Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

While there are no openings at this time on the Commission on Aging, Farmers' Market Committee, Recreation Committee, and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) residents are encouraged to send a letter expressing their interest in serving when there is an opening. The Community Center Committee, Fire Department and Historical Society are always interested in expanding their membership.

Individual contact and committee information can be found on the town's website. (lisbonct.com)

Lisbon Historical Society Quarterly Notes

By Kim Sperry

The Halloween snowstorm of 2011 brings back memories of winters long ago and reminds us that it is time to dust off the snow shovels.

Before the days of motorized plows, winter presented special challenges for cities like Norwich; snow was cleared by hand, loaded into wagons and dumped elsewhere, like a river. Snow removal in the country during the 18th and 19th centuries was not as big a deal. In fact, keeping packed snow on dirt roads was an asset to farmers traveling by horse drawn sleds.

The community's snow warden had the task of keeping the road smooth by packing and filling in melted and bare spots. This was done by using snow rollers pulled by oxen, or dragging the road with a heavy log.

Often winter roads were in better shape than the same road the rest of year. To get around during the winter off came the wagon wheels and on went the ski runners. The one horse open sleigh or 'cutter' was very cold to ride in and necessitated bundling up in layers of warm woolen clothing, gloves, and hats, with a heavy lap robe on top. Often, a foot or lap warmer containing a few hot coals or heated soapstone under the blanket would help give additional warmth for the ride, www.cthistoryonline.org.

While cold snowy winters might be trying for grownups, Lisbon's youngsters had a wonderful time sledding down Preston Allen Road. Reportedly, the best run started at the top of Kendall Road twisting and turning to Allen's Pond. A popular sled of the day was the "Speedaway" which was manufactured by the Paris Manufacturing Corporation of South Paris, Maine. Founded in 1861 by

Henry Morton, the company was the first major sled maker. A toboggan, which could carry several fearless kids at once, was an invention of Native Americans. Eastern Indians made their toboggans from strips of hickory, ash, or maple with the front ends curved back. It was used to carry game over the snow.

The Historical Society has a couple of activities planned for the winter. On Friday, January 13, 2012, Norwich Historical Society member and Cemetery Historian David Oat will give a talk on the Samuel Huntington Tomb. The 7:00 p.m. event, which will take place at the Lisbon Senior Center is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

We are now registering for three Open Hearth Cooking Classes on February 4, 2012, February 11 and February 19, 2012. These hands-on interpretive classes introduce adult students to the 19th century cooking techniques, tools and menus common to the residents of the John Bishop House. Our hope is that students take what they have learned and put it to use in their own homes while having a merry time. Check our website for details or call Paula Adams at 860-887-0852 for registration forms.

Once again, thank you to everyone for the can and bottle donations. Our regular contributors know we have had to change the way we sort and redeem glass bottles. We are now required to submit the bottles by brand, by color, and by distributor, which is much more labor intensive for the members who do the sorting, bagging, and crating. It is extremely helpful and much appreciated that our contributors drop off their donations in the original boxes/packaging.

The Society meets on the second Friday of each month in the town hall and new members are welcome. For information on Lisbon history and LHS event go to www.99main.com/~chill/Historic.html.

NOTICE

The newly constructed track behind the Senior Center will not be open to the public until after the final coating is applied in the spring.

Winter Parking Ban

The winter parking ban is in effect for town-owned roads and is enforced when the weather is expected to be hazardous for vehicles. Any vehicle found parked on Lisbon town roads during the ban may be towed at the owner's expense.

FY 2012-13 Budget Schedule

03/14/12 BoF Mtg., 7pm, Town Hall - Proposed FY2012/2013 General Government Budget Presentation & Discussion

03/21/12 BoF Mtg., 7pm, Town Hall - Proposed FY2012/2013 Board of Education Budget Presentation & Discussion

04/04/12 **Public Hearing**, 7pm, LCS Cafeteria - General Government & Board of Education Budgets

05/07/12 **Annual Town Meeting**, 7pm, LCS Cafeteria - Town Aid Road and Capital & Non-Recurring budgets will be voted on at this meeting.

The **Referendum** on the budgets will take place approximately two weeks after the Annual Town Meeting.