

## Salisbury Soldiers in the Civil War

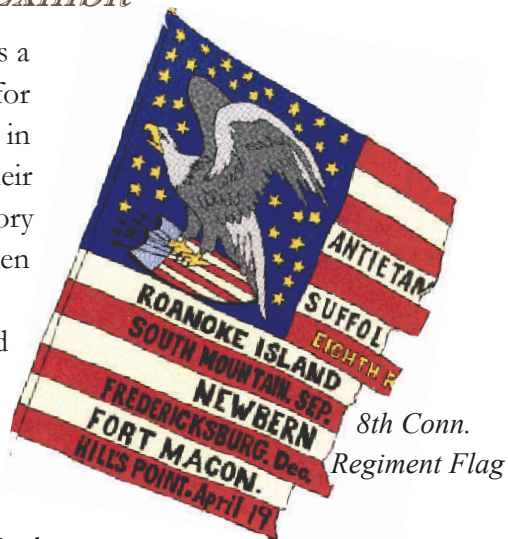
### Summer Exhibit

Letter writing was a favorite pastime for Salisbury soldiers in the Civil War. Their letters told the story of boredom broken by brief episodes of excitement and helped to ease homesickness and the frustrations inherent in army life. Civil War letters were not censored and sometimes had information on troop movements or military preparedness.

This summer's Salisbury Historical Society exhibit will feature letters by eight young Salisbury men who volunteered on September 7, 1861, in response to President Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> call for troops. They were all mustered into Company G, Townsend Rifles, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers.

*After the war, Thomas Lot Norton, of the 7th Connecticut Volunteers, described the imprisonment and escape of fellow recruit George Lee Wells.*

"Wells was taken prisoner on the Bermuda Hundred Line, in May 1864, and suffered in the Andersonville hell until Sherman's guns began to thunder in the vicinity, when he was shipped for a safer prison. On the way he watched his chances, slipped out of the car and gained the swamps of South Carolina. Night after night for two long weeks, piloted by faithful, black-skinned comrades, resting in the tangled everglades by day, he reached at last a river running to the sea, down which he glided, until the old flag waving over one of Uncle Sam's gunboats assured him of life and freedom."



8th Conn. Regiment Flag

### Remembering Salisbury's Black Servicemen

*In the excerpts below, history buff Tim Abbott shares his research findings on Salisbury's black servicemen in the Civil War, focusing in particular on individuals named (or not named) on the Salisbury Civil War monument on the Town Green.*

Salisbury's Civil War monument, dedicated in June, 1891, records the names of 13 men of African ancestry who enlisted in the Union army during the conflict. My own research indicates that there may be as many as 17 black servicemen who should be credited to Salisbury and who enlisted in segregated regiments during the Civil War.

Salisbury's first black soldiers were paid substitutes for drafted men. As Connecticut had not yet authorized any colored regiments of its own, these men joined a total of 66 black men from the state who in September, 1863, were assigned to the 14<sup>th</sup> Rhode Island (colored) Heavy Artillery. Later redesignated the 11<sup>th</sup> United States volunteer (colored) Heavy Artillery, this unit saw extended garrison duty in the deep South. Two of these men from Salisbury are named on the monument. A third, Private Lyman Moore, is credited to Salisbury in State records, but the 1889 Adjutant General's report attributes him to New Haven.

The majority of Salisbury's black soldiers enlisted in the 29<sup>th</sup> Connecticut (colored) infantry, which began recruiting in November, 1863. There were two men attributed to Salisbury named



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#### Contact us

Phone 860-435-0566

#### E-mail

salisburyassn@gmail.com

#### Website

salisburyassn.org

#### Newsletter

**Editor/Writer**  
Elaine Hecht

**Design & Production**  
Lou Hecht

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Charles Brown, each serving in a different company of the regiment, but only one man by that name appears on the monument. Another soldier, Private John Brown, served in Company I but was omitted from the memorial. Private David Addison of Company A is among the names commemorated, but he is not attributed to Salisbury in any of the State archives. He does appear to have had family here, and two of his brothers are named with him on the monument, so it is likely that he belongs there as well.

As the ranks of the 29<sup>th</sup> were completed, additional men were accepted into a second black regiment: the 30<sup>th</sup> Connecticut. Four companies raised in Connecticut were later merged with others from other states to form the 31<sup>st</sup> United States volunteer (colored) Infantry. These troops were at the head of their



brigade during the disastrous Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, where they lost all of their field officers.

In his address to the veterans of the 29<sup>th</sup> Connecticut on their mustering out at Hartford on October 22, 1865, Governor Buckingham remarked:

*"...although Connecticut now denies you the privileges which it grants to others, for no other apparent reason than because God has made you to differ in complexion, yet justice will not always stand afar off. Be patient; be true to yourselves. Remember that merit consists not in color or in birth, but in habits of industry, in intellectual ability and moral character. Cultivate these characteristics of true worth . . . and soon the voice of a majority of liberty-loving freemen will be heard demanding for you every right and privilege to which your intelligence and moral character shall entitle you."* —Tim Abbott

### "Tooth Dullers"

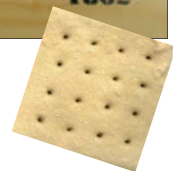
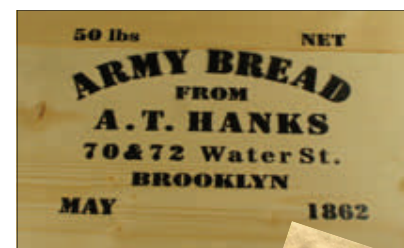
A Union soldier had a simple diet: meat, coffee, sugar, and a biscuit called hardtack.

Made from flour and water, hardtack was similar to a large soda cracker. Factories in the north baked hundreds of these crackers every day, packed them in wooden crates and shipped them out by wagon or rail.

If the hardtack

was received soon after leaving the factory, it was tasty.

However, it usually did not reach the soldiers until months after having been made. By that time, the biscuits were so hard that the soldiers called them "tooth dullers" or "sheet iron crackers." They dipped them in coffee or softened them in water before frying them in bacon grease.



Salisbury's Town Historian Katherine Chilcoat is looking for volunteers to work in

the History Room archives at Scoville Library answering questions relating to Salisbury genealogy and history. All that is necessary is a genuine interest in Salisbury and a love of research. One afternoon a week would be an enormous help. If interested, call Katherine Chilcoat at 860-435-9404, or leave a message with Laura Carlson at the Salisbury Association: 860-435-0566.





*Water and forests played an important role in Salisbury's history.*

*Photo by Joseph Meehan*

## *Where We Live*

Salisbury has an extraordinary landscape and a remarkable history. Familiarity with both adds to our understanding and appreciation of the context in which we live. We are factors in our landscape's evolution and a part of history in the making.

In September, the Salisbury Association Land Trust will present a photo exhibit on the town's natural resources and landscapes. In conjunction with the exhibit, the Land Trust and Historical Society will team up to organize a Saturday morning bus tour in October (date TBA), providing an overview of Salisbury's natural and human history.

Stopping-off points along the bus route provide examples of how natural and historic resources have interacted to make Salisbury what it is today: geology and ice age glaciers set the stage; Native Americans fished, farmed and hunted; rich natural resources of minerals, forests, flowing streams and agricultural soils drew early European settlers. And as they say, "The rest is history."



Among the many questions to be explored are: Who were Thomas Lamb, Horatio Ames and Ethan Allen, and why did they settle here? How did Hammertown Road get its name? What about Puddler's Lane? How are the town's natural resources being protected?

Plan to join your neighbors at the fall exhibit and ride the bus to learn more about this special place where we live. —*George Massey*

**Correction:** A caption in the fall 2012 Newsletter (p. 2) misidentified the driver of the tractor. He is Daniel Bottass, raking hay at the Grossman-Arensberg property.



## *Historically Speaking*

What's on the 2013 agenda for Heritage and Era of Elegance talks?  
Co-sponsored by the Salisbury Association Historical Society and  
Scoville Memorial Library, the lectures take place on selected  
Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. in the library's Wardell Room.

### *March 16: Architectural Preservation in Our National Parks*

—by *Richard Chilcoat*

The March talk offered an inside look at how the National Parks Service is conserving our cultural heritage. Presenter Richard Chilcoat serves as Chief, Construction Conservation and Training for the National Parks Service, Historic Architecture, Conservation and Engineering Center (HACE), in Lowell, Massachusetts.

From 1986 to 1990 Mr. Chilcoat was employed by the Central Park Conservancy as Director of Preservation, coordinating restoration of Central Park's architectural heritage. He has been involved in many historic properties including FDR's Hyde Park home, Val-Kill, restoration of the Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia, Alden Weir's Farm in Wilton, CT, Castle Clinton in New York City, St. Paul's Church in Mt. Vernon, NY, and Ellis Island.



*The Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia*



*Steam engine on the Twin Lakes trestle (Salisbury Association archives)*

### *April 6: The Coming of the East-West Railroad*

—by *Dick Paddock*

One of the most significant changes in the lifestyle of those who lived here before us was the revolution in transportation that arrived with the development of railroads. This was especially true of the northwest corner of Connecticut which had no navigable waterways, and where travel by roads was difficult. Local historian Dick Paddock discussed the impact of the railroad on life in our area.

*September 21: Voices of Lakeville*  
—by Jean McMillen and  
Dick Paddock

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century comes alive again this fall, drawing on the recollections of two Lakeville women who, looking back to their youth, chronicled the stories of Lakeville residents, their homes along Main Street, some dating back to the 1700s, and the impact of the Holley Manufacturing Company. Jean McMillen and Dick Paddock will lead the journey through this bustling community of the past.



*Main Street in Lakeville, early 20th century*  
(Salisbury Association archives)



*The Lakeville Baseball Team, 1910*  
(Salisbury Association archives)

*October 19: When Baseball Was Local*  
—by Rusty Chandler

Rusty Chandler and others will share stories and recollections of the time when “When Baseball Was Local.” Baseball, our national sport, had teams of local athletes competing ever as strongly as today’s millionaires at Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium. Each town had its own followers, with great excitement and honor at stake as Salisbury sent its best pitchers against the batsmen of Sharon. Attendees are welcome to bring their old gloves-- just in case any balls start moving around.



## *Seen Around Town*

### *Dramatizing History*

Salisbury Central School actors in a play recreating town history. In this scene, young travelers go back in time to meet Thomas Lamb (in top hat), founder of Salisbury's first iron forge. The students engaged members of the Salisbury Historical Society to learn more about our local history.



*Photo by Jeanne Meiers*



### *Student Naturalist*

Salisbury Central School eighth-grader Maggie Sullivan (*left*) interviewed Elaine Hecht of the Salisbury Land Trust for information on Salisbury's habitats and biodiversity, the subject of her science project. The Land Trust provides financial support for environmental education programs at the school.

### *Conservation Pioneer*

Doris Walker, a member of the original Salisbury Association Land Trust and the town's first Conservation Commission, was honored by the Land Trust for her many years of leadership and dedicated service in land preservation. Priscilla (Fiddle) Ellsworth hosted the evening get-together.



### *Telling Tales*

The Salisbury Association's Oral History Project, launched in 1981, records and transcribes the stories and memories of people who lived and worked in Salisbury, creating a first-hand account of local history. Recently, Nick Nickerson and Jean McMillen selected a number of stories for a new publication called "Sarum Samplings Vol.1." Their committee also put together an Oral History Index identifying completed transcriptions available on computer.



## *When a Mighty Oak Falls*

### *At the Grove*

Like all living things, even the most majestic oak is bound by time. Such was the case when a 300-year-old white oak at the Grove blew down during a storm. Though no longer present in its original form, the spirit of the tree is with us, being transformed into a beautiful 16-foot meeting table for the Academy Building, home of the Salisbury Association Land Trust and Historical Society.

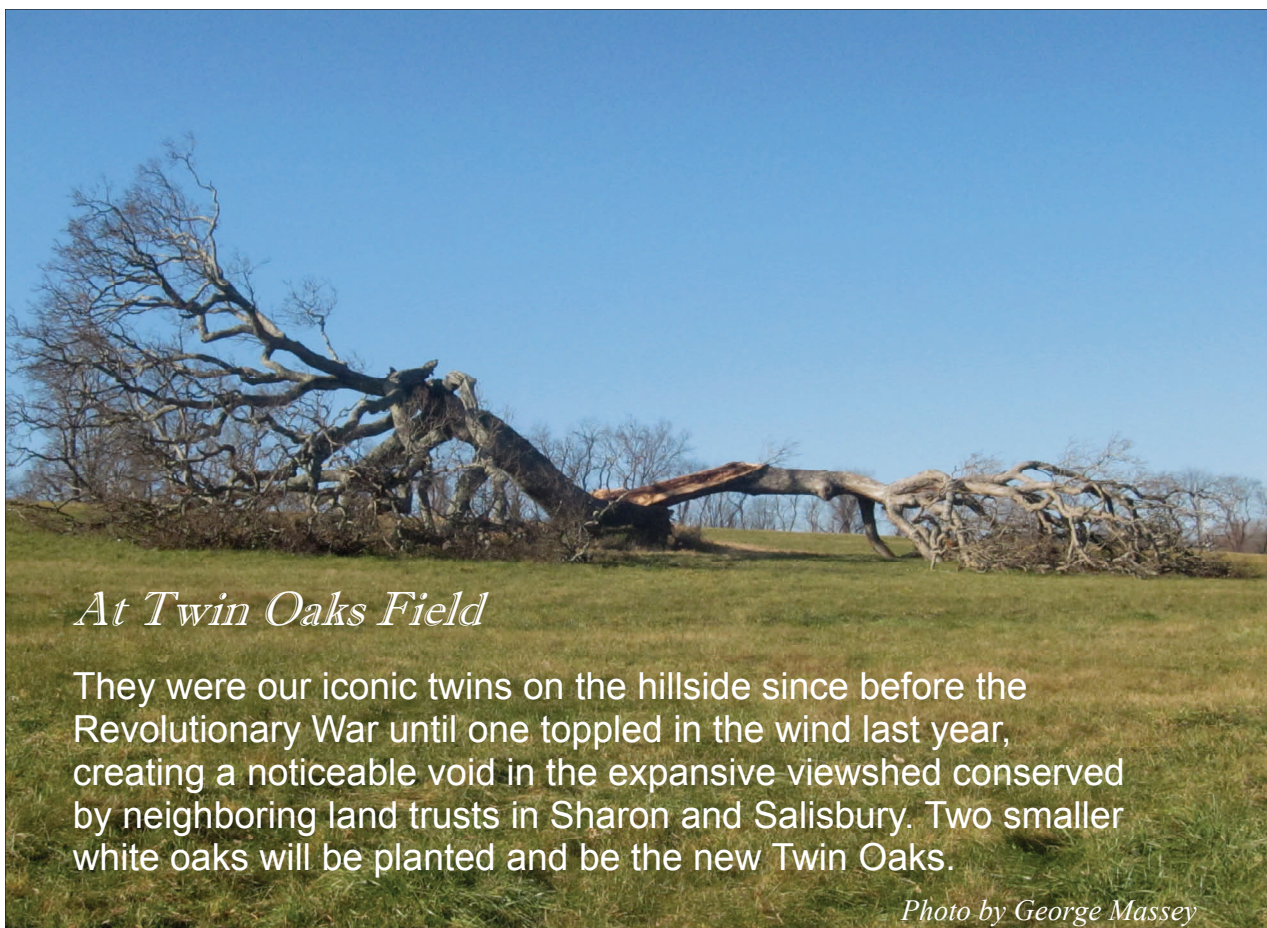
When allowed use of the wood by the town, the Association commissioned David Bowen of Salisbury Artisans to craft a special table. Among the many steps involved in going from tree to finished product, a few are noted here.

First, the fallen tree was “bucked up” by the Town Crew—cut into one 20-foot-long log—before being pressure-washed to remove rocks and dirt. The log was cut into boards and air-dried in a pre-kiln, followed by dry heat in a kiln. The boards were rough-planed before transfer to Salisbury Artisans, where David Bowen began the creative and time-consuming work of styling and fashioning a distinctive table—good for the next 300 years!



*Photo by Dave Heck*

*Craftsman David Bowen at his Salisbury Artisans workshop*



### *At Twin Oaks Field*

They were our iconic twins on the hillside since before the Revolutionary War until one toppled in the wind last year, creating a noticeable void in the expansive viewshed conserved by neighboring land trusts in Sharon and Salisbury. Two smaller white oaks will be planted and be the new Twin Oaks.

*Photo by George Massey*

### *Honoring Our Revolutionary War Soldiers*

Salisbury had officially recognized and honored those who fought and died in the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War and Vietnam, but a plaque dedicated to the soldiers lost in the Revolutionary War had been conspicuously absent—absent, that is, until last year.

At the 2012 Veteran's Day ceremony, the Salisbury Association and the



Salisbury Arsenal Chapter of the DAR presented the town with a bronze Revolutionary War plaque with the names of twenty-five soldiers who gave their lives for their new country. Two, Joseph Waterous and Nathaniel Winslow, rest in the nearby Burying Ground.

### *More Than a Trifle*

The Salisbury Association's Civic Activities committee engages in projects for the betterment of the town: funding the July 4th celebration at the Town Grove, financial aid for town beautification, and support for civic education at Salisbury Central School. The Powell Fund maintains trees in town and the Toulmin Fund assists with projects at the Grove.

And let's not forget the annual Victorian Christmas Concert. In December, sixty concertgoers sampled a varied musical menu of Bach, Handel and Vivaldi, along with traditional holiday songs from the Shetland Islands, France and Germany. Intermission came with an array of desserts, among them Laura Carlson's "Death by Chocolate" trifle. Everyone survived; the trifle did not.



The Salisbury Association  
24 Main Street  
P.O. Box 553  
Salisbury, CT 06068

Presorted Standard  
Non-profit  
Permit #106  
Lakeville, CT 06039

Postal Patron