

Strong-Porter House
COVENTRY



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Sign Post

Brick School House
COVENTRY, CT



The following article was composed and researched by **Peter Hrechanyk**, a CHS Board member. There is also a copy posted at the Strong-Porter Museum with our new exhibit **Coventry in Arms**.

The Brothers from Coventry

One of my favorite books about the American Civil War was written by Dr. Robert Bee of Mansfield, Connecticut. titled **The Boys From Rockville**. Dr. Bee carefully went over a collection of letters from Sgt. Benjamin Hirst of Company D, 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, a native of Rockville, and skillfully wrote a book about it. It's a must for reading if someone is studying Connecticut's soldiers in the War for the Union. Other Tolland County towns were represented in Company D also, including Coventry.

Every Thursday before Memorial Day, members of the Rockville Sons of Union Veterans and reenactors hold a small, dignified, and proper memorial service in that town. I have been proud to be a member of the rifle squad that fires three tribute volleys.

Last year Mr. Brad Keune of the Rockville SUV asked me if I had ever seen the graves of two brothers from the regiment we portray as the 14th Connecticut Volunteers. I said no and he told me they were in the Center Cemetery on Rt. 44. The next morning I set out to find these heroes. It didn't take long. Center Cemetery is a small rural cemetery. I found the two worn weathered marble monuments so close you can put one hand on each stone. A visit to the Town Clerk's office proved them indeed to be brothers. Private Samuel Lillie Talcott age 20 years and Private Henry Talcott age 26, were the youngest of 6 children of Erastus and Aurelia Lillie Talcott. Both boys enlisted on 13 August 1862. A month later they were in the bloodiest battle in American history, called Antietam in the North and called Sharpsburg in the South. The 14th hardly had time to learn to drill. The regiment lost 137 casualties that 17th September 1862. At the end of the day General George Brinton McClellan's Army of the Potomac had possession of the bloody field and Bobby Lee retired to live and fight another day.

Back home in many Connecticut towns and our Coventry, many families waited desperately for the terrible news that would eventually come. Samuel and Henry meanwhile were mortally wounded and both would die with in a few weeks after the battle. They would be part of the 26,000 casualties suffered in a single "great and terrible day". I found several Talcott houses on an 1860s map of Coventry, one on what is now called Silver Street, and three more Talcott houses on Talcott Hill Rd. One is notated E. Talcott most likely the home of their father Erastus Talcott age 65 at the death of his two youngest children.

I can not imagine losing a child in a war, but two in a single battle..... I am reminded of President Abraham Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Lydia A. Bixby:

"I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming.

But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. (Continued on page 2)

I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom”.

President Lincoln’s words still apply today more than ever.

The 14th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers would go on from Antietam to be known as “the fighting Fourteenth”, fight ferociously and bleed in every battle the Army of the Potomac until General Lee finally surrendered at Appomattox Court House in 1865. By the end of the war, the 14th would lose 188 KIA, 552 WIA, 191 POWs and 189 died of disease. The regiment never lost its colors in battle and 3 soldiers received Medals of Honor.

Tragically, the state’s losses are staggering by any standard. During the Civil War 1191 Connecticut soldiers were killed outright in combat, 711 died of wounds and a unbelievable 3309 died of disease. Over all 626,000 Americans died in the American Civil War.

Sadly there will be no book about the Talcott boys or Private George W. Corbit, a neighbor and Co. D member also mortally wounded at Antietam and buried just a few feet away. They only had a chance to get one or two homesick letters off before they laid their lives upon the altar of freedom.

Civil War Regiments from Connecticut, Federal Publishing Co. 1908

Mills, Lewis S., The Story of Connecticut, Mills, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1933.

Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of the Rebellion, Case, Lockwood and Brainard Co. 1889

Town of Coventry Records, Births Vol. 2 page 276

Town of Coventry Records, Births Vol. 4 page 19

Notes from the President:

Hard to believe that it is July already. The Society has some exciting news! We have received a grant to help us continue with our restoration of the Strong Porter Barn. As of this date, I have not seen the amount of our grant yet, but hopefully it will be enough for us to continue with phase II of our work on the barn. Last fall as you may know we stabilized the foundation before our haunted evenings to make sure that our barn floor could withstand all that dancing. With a sigh of relief that work was completed just the week before the event. As with all the grants we receive, we will need to match this grant with cash, but with your help we can probably do it. Please volunteer to help us this fall as we hold our Hauntingly Enchanted Evening for two weekends in October. With all the work that goes into this event, two weekends seemed to make sense. We need wenches and bakers and actors and candle lighters, well we need a lot of people. Please sign up to help. Call your friends too. Everyone has a good time.

December brings the Christmas House Tour. Again we will need people to help staff the homes and people to park cars. Don’t feel left out. The day after the tour all those who worked get to go and see the homes as well.

With the Farmers’ Market just down the road each Sunday, tours of the Strong Porter Museum have picked up. We could use some ideas for more activities to bring people to our door this summer. If you have any ideas and can help, please call.

Pat Natusch, President 742-7474

Society Events

All dates and times are tentative. Please refer to the CHS Web Pages for the most accurate information.

Sunday, June 21

Sundae on a Sunday

Brick School House 1 to 4 p.m.

Fathers are FREE and family members pay a \$1.00 for a Sundae

Saturday, July 18th

Members Picnic, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

All members are invited to attend our annual Members Picnic on the grounds of the Strong Porter Museum. The Society will supply hamburgers/hot dogs/rolls/drinks and paper goods. Members are asked to bring a salad or dessert to share. Members A to M bring a main dish and N to Z can bring a dessert.

Last year 40 people attended this event and had a wonderful time. Please bring a lawn chair. You can tour the museum and gift shop and catch up on Society news!

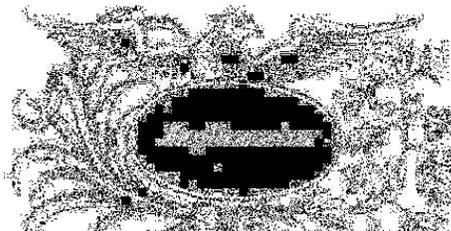
Saturday, September 19th

Budget Meeting Picnic - Strong Porter Museum

More information forthcoming

Wanted: Volunteer help for Strong Porter Museum

One or two people are needed each **Sundays from June 7- mid October from 12 noon until 3 p.m.** as a second docent or to work in our Gift Shop. We have pulled out of the Farmers' Market this year and hope to make the society money by having a gift shop in the Carpenter Shop. The Carpenter Shop still has a display but we have added a small gift shop in the same space to sell soda and water and Historical Society Gifts. With the Farmers' Market down the street, Bill Reale, our docent has become extremely busy and really needs help. Please call Pat Natusch 742-7474.



Betty Bearce - February

Ruth Gehring - March

Harriet Eaton - April

Len Gillon - April

Eva Kingsbury - May

Coventry Historical Society

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The Coventry Historical Society Web Site is located at:

www.coventrycthistoricalsociety.org

Executive Board

President	Patricia Natusch	742-7474
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Bob Visny	742-8354

Wanted: Articles for Publication in THE SIGN POST.

Send or email your article to the Society. Please include complete citations of information in your article, including the name of the source, author, place and date of publication. Articles must be received by a board member by the 2nd Thursday of the month. Articles in Word or PDF form send to:
Sign Post Editor Jim Murphy
murf1776@charter.net

Become a Member

If you aren't already a member of the Coventry Historical Society, please consider joining now!

Single Membership \$10.00

Family Membership \$15.00

Send us your name, address and contact information using one of the methods listed on the left of this page.

Telephone number and **email address** would be appreciated.

*Coventry Historical Society
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