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Charles Ives birthplace, autumn 2020.

Hello Friends!

We hope everyone is ready for a blue moon, the autumn "fall back" time change, and Halloween this weekend! In true 2020 fashion, nothing happens in small ways.

The last month has, no surprise, been another busy one for us. The balmy, sunny days of October allowed us to paint not only the interior of the Little Red Schoolhouse, but refresh the exterior shutters, fascia, and door as well. And as long as the weather holds ::fingers crossed::

Speaking of PROGRESS, we can't wait to share with you the progress we've made at the Ives birthplace. The incredibly generous donation earlier this year from Savings Bank of Danbury has been put to excellent use and the house is really coming to life again. Stay tuned and we hope to share photos of all the great work in the coming weeks. It's so very exciting for all of us to see this

project taking shape in such a harmonious way.

The museum staff is also hard at work finalizing the details for the Hat City Ball which will be happening in some fashion on Friday, February 12, 2021. We'll obviously be working with our great partners at the Amber Room Colonnade on making the event as special as possible. If you're interested in what we're thinking the event might look like, visit the [Hat City Ball](#) page on our website.

And finally, you may have heard about comedian John Oliver's "Danbury Dustup" that culminated with the John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant here in Danbury. The City of Danbury and Mayor Boughton's office had a really fun graphic created (by Christopher Mihaly) and they have given us the chance to sell t-shirts and other JOMSP branded items. There's a photo below and a link to our online store at [TeePublic](#) which is really one-stop shopping for so many great Danbury-themed items. We're grateful to the City and the Mayor's team for this fundraising opportunity! We're also working to get other Museum Gift Shop items online for holiday pick-up, so please stay tuned.

Our talented columnists, John O'Donnell and Thomas MacGregor, return this month with interesting essays. John shares a most fascinating Danbury connection to the assassination of President Lincoln, and Tom has a creepy-crawly tale of Danbury's good and not so good bugs.

And if you haven't visited our outdoor Danbury Fair, 1918 Pandemic, or Johnny Appleseed walk-n-read in the garden you still have time `::touch wood::` before the snow flies.

We'll keep busy and hope you're all keeping well. Until November...

Brigid Guertin (Executive Director, City Historian, Fearless Leader)

Patrick Wells (Research Specialist, Social Media Manager, Puzzle Master, and Plague Doctor)

Michele Lee Amundsen (Collections Manager, Newsletter Nudge, Piano Proselytizer)

City of Danbury John Oliver Memorial
Sewer Plant merchandise



In coordination with the City of Danbury and Mayor Mark Boughton, the Danbury Museum is pleased to promote the official merch of the John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant in Danbury, CT, designed by Christopher Mihaly.

25% of the profits from all John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant items will be donated to the Danbury Food Collaborative.

Looking for a really unique gift for friends and family? The City of Danbury and Mayor Mark Boughton gave the Danbury Museum the great opportunity to sell merchandise commemorating the naming of the John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant using the fun design created by Christopher Mihaly. You can get the graphic or the logo of the actual sign on just about anything at our online [TeePublic](#) store. 25% of the profits from the sales of all John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant items will benefit the Danbury Food Collaborative, the remainder will benefit the Danbury Museum. The great thing about this online shop is that you can buy the size, color, and item you want and send it right off to your friends or relatives--easy and convenient!



Gray John
Oliver
Memorial
Sewer Plant
Hoodie size L
\$30.00



Gray John
Oliver
Memorial
Sewer Plant
Hoodie size
XL
\$30.00



Gray John
Oliver
Memorial
Sewer Plant
Hoodie size
XXL
\$30.00

For those of you that live in or around Danbury--and if you can't wait for a tee or hoodie from our

TeePublic shop--we will be selling a limited number of hoodies and tees in our [museum online shop](#). These will be available beginning next Wednesday and they must be purchased via our website and contact-free pick up will be arranged, we will not be taking phone orders or shipping merchandise.



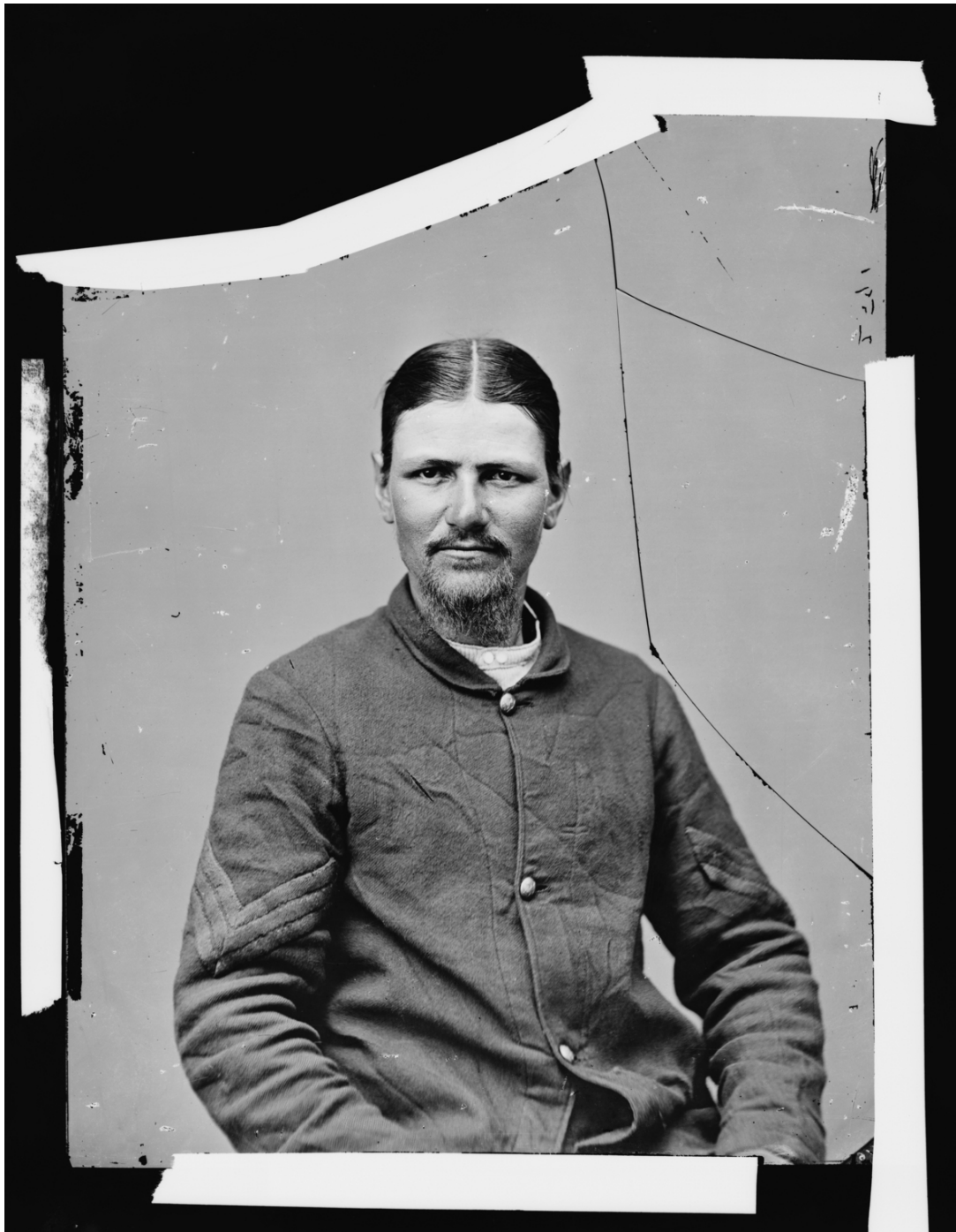
Classic Danbury Fair Grandstand produce display.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The COVID-19 health crisis has had a strong impact on the Danbury Museum, not unlike other public service organizations. To help us continue doing the work we love--from home and from behind the scenes over the next few months--please consider making a donation. Your gift, regardless of size, is important to us as we regroup and continue to work toward eventually reopening to the public. A monthly, sustaining membership via PayPal has the most impact and is an easy way to support the museum for as little as the cost of a cup of coffee each month.

[Donate here.](#)

[Become a member here.](#)



Thomas H "Boston" Corbett as photographed by Mathew Brady - Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Brady-Handy Photograph Collection.

Danbury's Role in the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

By John O'Donnell

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865, by John Wilkes Booth produced a cataclysmic shock to the government and people of the United States of America. This was the first assassination of a president in our history, and the horror at this event produced cries for bringing the conspirators to justice as soon as possible. This effort was led by the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Stanton quickly got to work bringing the assassins and those who aided them to justice by offering enormous rewards for the capture of the conspirators and even sending military groups to search for John Wilkes Booth. He gave express orders that Booth be taken alive so as to stand trial for this heinous crime. One of the groups sent out was from the 16th New York Cavalry and it

included twenty-six men, a lieutenant, and two detectives. This group was able to track Booth and David Herold to Garrett's farm in Front Royal, Virginia, where Booth was surrounded in a barn. He had no ability to escape from the barn but refused to come out and surrender. The besiegers set fire to the barn in order to force him out. He was leaning on a crutch but was armed with a revolver and a carbine. One of the Union group was observing him from a hole in the barn wall and thought he was going to fire on his colleagues. He shot Booth and critically wounded him, with Booth dying three hours later. Who was this soldier who defied the express wishes of Stanton? His name was Boston Corbett, and he was a most interesting man.

"Boston's" real name was Thomas Corbett and he was born in London in 1833. He and his family came to the United States in 1840 and settled in New York City. Thereafter, he followed a very peripatetic existence moving frequently. He moved to Boston and while there he was converted to Methodism and took the first name Boston to commemorate his conversion. He became a street preacher and was heavily devoted to his religious beliefs. He appeared to have suffered from mental imbalance and this was made worse by his employment as a hatter. (Historians theorize that his problems were intensified by his exposure to the deleterious effects of exposure to mercury.)

The defining event of his life was undoubtedly his service in the Civil War. He enlisted for service twice and continued his religious efforts while serving, often scolding his fellow soldiers and even his superiors for using profanity or other sinful behaviors he observed. He was court-martialed for reprimanding Colonel David Butterfield for taking the Lord's name in vain, but his sentence was reduced and he was discharged in August of 1863. He reenlisted in soon after in the 16th New York Cavalry Regiment. He was captured by the Confederate Army on June 24, 1864, and was sent to the worst Confederate prison, Andersonville, and survived--unlike a host of other Union prisoners-- a five-month imprisonment. He also testified at the trial of the Commandant of Andersonville, Henry Wirz, who was condemned to death.

Corbett became a celebrity as a result of his killing John Wilkes Booth. At first Stanton thought of court-martialing him again but then thought better of that. He exonerated him by stating the Corbett had acted from patriotic motives. Corbett received his share of the reward which was \$1,653.84. He could have sold the revolver he had used to kill Booth for \$1,000 but elected not to. In a curious twist of fate, the wound that killed Booth was almost identical to the wound that Booth had inflicted on Lincoln.

Corbett returned to Boston after the war, but the hatting industry was on the wane there so he moved to Danbury, Connecticut, where hatting was still a major industry. While in Danbury, he continued his religious preaching. He did not stay long in Danbury, however, and in the 1870 Census he was in Camden, New Jersey, and his occupation was listed as "preaching the Gospel." Corbett also moved on to Kansas, but his behavior became so erratic that he was declared insane and placed in an insane asylum in Topeka. Escaping from the asylum, he is thought to have gone to Minnesota where he likely died in the Great Hinckley Fire of 1894. His erratic behavior certainly gives a persuasive argument that he suffered greatly from his exposure to mercury during his career as a hatter.

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



Stink bug! (Photo: Dr Tom MacGregor)

The Bugs of Danbury

By Thomas MacGregor, Ph.D.
UConn Advanced Master Gardener

I've often thought that the best Halloween costumes have been of bugs. Individuals dressed up as moths or stink bugs would be the scariest, and, like their namesakes, they would go straight for the residences with lights on to get treats.

At the Fairfield County Extension Center in Bethel, there is a collection of scary bugs captured in the Danbury area and mounted in display boxes under glass. This collection has been painstakingly assembled by Advanced Master Gardener Nicole Christensen from hundreds of bugs brought in for identification by local area residents. These bugs have been preserved, pinned, and identified to aid gardeners and homeowners in distinguishing bad bugs from beneficial bugs. A description of how Nicole assembled the collection can be found at www.farmgirlbloggers.com/13440.

Although the Extension Center collection is quite large, sometimes a gardener or tree surgeon will bring in a specimen that doesn't match any preserved bug. What does a Master Gardener volunteer do then? First, he/she compares it to photos from Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station publications to determine whether it is a new and potentially harmful invasive bug, like those stink bugs that invaded Danbury in 2012 and are still with us. Such invasive bugs are promptly reported to the state authorities in an attempt to protect Connecticut vegetation, including farm crops. Then, the Master Gardener might search photos in books in the Center's extensive library. However, many bugs undergo metamorphosis from a nymph to an adult stage and may not look similar to available photos. Also, the library collection may only show photos of one life stage of a particular bug or photos of many look alike bugs that are not native to Danbury.

Trying to guess the developmental stage of a bug based on calendar timing in New England is comparable to trying to guess with accuracy of next week's weather prediction based on historical weather patterns from the Farmer's Almanac. Unlike with humans, bug and plant developments are temperature dependent and may be predicted using "phenology." As defined in Wikipedia, "phenology is the study of periodic events in biological life cycles and how these are influenced by seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate." A few warm weeks in late winter or early spring can accelerate bug development in a predictable manner that the calendar might otherwise miss. Most bugs start developing only when the outside temperature gets above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Each daily degree above this bug development threshold is considered one heat unit. Taking the average temperature for each day and subtracting 50 degrees provides the heat units for that day, called Growing Degree Days (GDD) units. For instance, an average temperature of 65 degrees in one day would yield 15 GDD units (that is, $65-50=15$). The life cycle of a bug will progress in a predictable manner according to cumulative heat units until it matures into an adult. One can use this information to identify a bug within a specific life cycle.

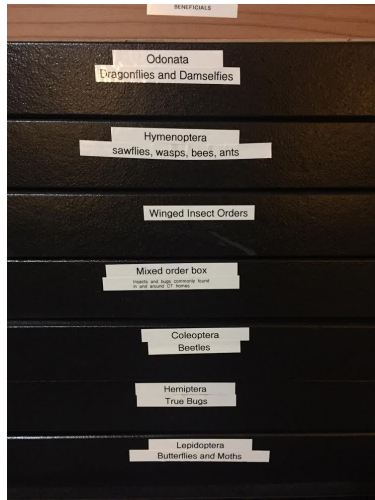
As an example, when the GDD reaches 1029 units, the Master Gardener can expect to observe fully-developed Japanese beetles. Well before Halloween, that stink bug is an adult at 538 GDD units and moths are flying around at 300-600 GDD units depending on the species. There are extensive on-line charts for bugs and their related GDD units, and one just needs to look at the current GDD number to see which bugs are active. Bugs that take longer to develop by needing a greater number of GDD units to mature can be ruled out when looking at similar species.

Additionally, phenology can provide some interesting climate data. A GDD of 1029 units measured at Danbury airport has progressed from being observed in early July in the 1930s to late May in the 1990s. Those beetles that attack the bridal rose garden for a June wedding in the modern era would not have been fully developed for a wedding during the same month in the Gatsby era.

After 33 years at Boehringer Ingelheim, **Dr. Tom** (UConn '85) retired to his garden and piano.



Beneficial ladybug nymph eating an aphid. (Photo: John Sabo, New Milford, CT.)

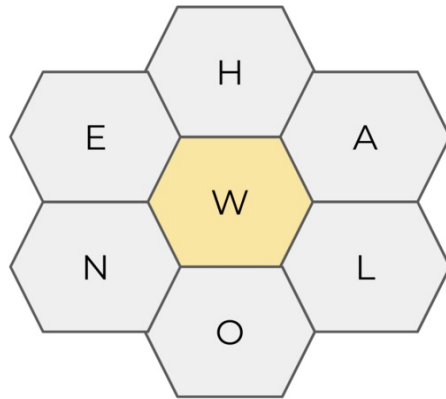


Photos courtesy of Nicole Christensen.



We've added a number of new designs to our [TeePublic](#) shop including Danbury Fair, Danbury street scenes, and Charles Ives. Take a look and remember that the Danbury Museum receives a cut of each sale, so shop early and shop often!

Danbury Museum “Buzzwords”



How to Play

Create words using letters from the hive.

- Words must contain at least 4 letters.
- Words must include the center letter.
- Our word list does not include words that are obscure, hyphenated, or proper nouns.
- No cussing either, sorry.
- Letters can be used more than once.

Score points to increase your rating.

- 4-letter words are worth 1 point each.
- Longer words earn 1 point per letter.
- Each puzzle includes at least one “pangram” which uses every letter. These are worth 7 extra points!

Puzzlemaster Patrick has made a really great new Halloween Buzzwords puzzle on our Museum from Home Page. You'll want to check it out and see how well you do! Stimulate your brain and visit the [#museumfromhome](#) page for lots of great puzzles, activities, and PDFs of exclusively Danbury content. Our [Museum From Home](#) page is really one stop shopping for a lot of Danbury history content. From Bailey's *History of Danbury* to the Tricentennial pamphlets and more, we've got you covered.

There's also an entire page dedicated to you jigsaw puzzle fans over at [Jigsaw Planet](#) and we've put up another classic Danbury image for your puzzling pleasure.

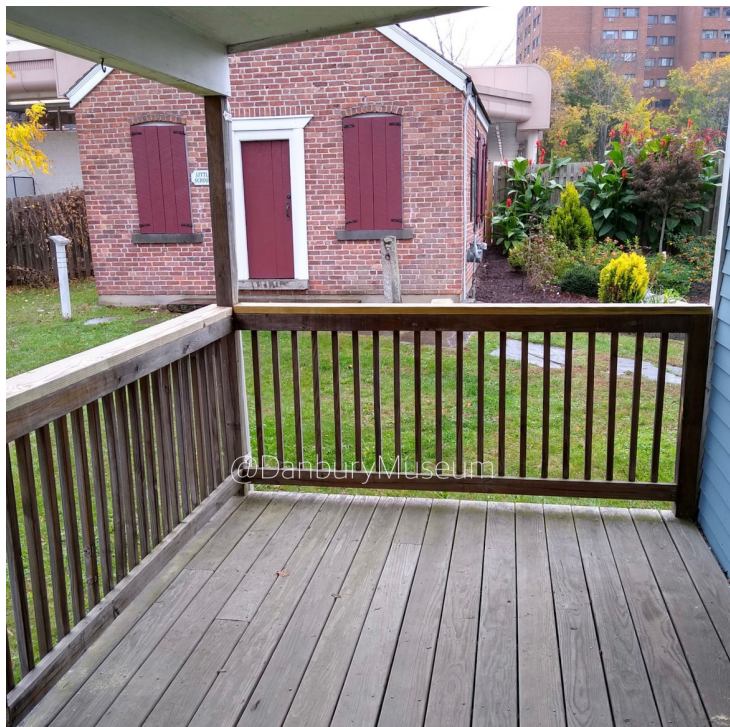
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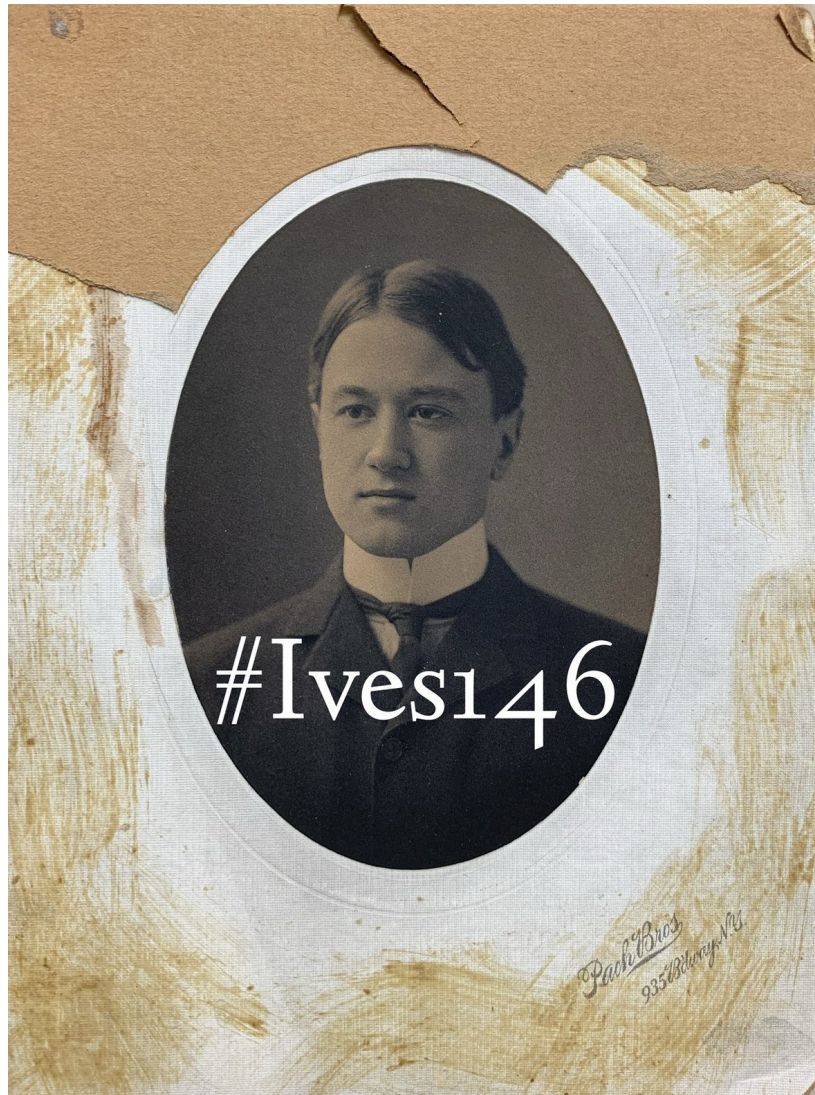


The Little Red Schoolhouse gets finishing touches of fresh paint.



Repaired railings on the porch of the Marian Anderson Studio.

With the Little Red Schoolhouse all freshly painted, we'll be moving on to a refresh of the Marian Anderson Studio. While COVID-19 has presented the museum with many challenges, it has also created opportunities and we're committed to using this time to make improvements where we can. The railings on the Studio's porch were reinforced and we'll be painting--both inside and out--as long as the weather allows.



On October 10, 2020, we commemorated the 146th anniversary of the birth of Danbury's Pulitzer Prize winner, composer Charles Edward Ives.

We'll keep in touch, and we hope you will, too. Be well, take care of yourselves, and we'll look forward to meeting here again in November.



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