



Pardee-Morris Town Crier

The newsletter of the
New Haven Museum's Pardee-Morris House

"Periscope on the Road" recalls

230th anniversary of British invasion of the East Shore

July 2009

On June 17, 2009, the Pardee-Morris House welcomed a group of visitors to the East Shore's important historic sites associated with the American Revolution. New Haven Museum Consultant Bill Hosley led the group of two dozen history buffs who were fascinated by the real story of the Revolution. They started out on the impressive promontory at Fort Hale, from which they could see the whole sweep of New Haven Harbor. From that point, they could envision the enormous British invasion force landing on July 5, 1779 at the site of the lighthouse, with local families scurrying to bury their possessions and flee the approaching redcoats, while the men stayed behind to defend the city.

The invasion of New Haven was not one of the most famous battles of the American Revolution. But when one recalls the political leaders, clerics, educators and nation-builders New Haven contributed to the Revolution and to the birth of the nation, it's not only important, it's inspirational.

Standing on the lawn of the Pardee-Morris house today, as the 230th anniversary of the invasion approached, it was poignant to remember that four of William Pardee's ancestors died defending the city. The Morrises lost everything when their farmhouse, which stood at what is presently 325 Lighthouse Road, was burned by the invaders.

On the tour's last stop, Fort Wooster, the group hiked up through the brush to the summit of "Beacon Hill," so named because it was the highest point this side of East Rock and a primary spot for navigation and harbor defense communications. Many commented that they had no idea how much there was left to see at the site and how helpful it would be if some landscaping, signage and path improvements could restore a clearer sense of what this now-overgrown area really was, not only the site of a Revolutionary War battle, but also the site of a Native American fort and burial ground! ∞



"Periscope on the Road" visits the Pardee-Morris House

New leader reveals future plans

At a meeting of the East Shore Management Team at the Morris Cove Fire House on June 9, 2009, New Haven Museum President and CEO Walter Miller indicated to the neighborhood that a new day was coming for the Pardee-Morris House. The historic property at 325 Lighthouse Road has been in the Museum's care since 1918 when it was left to the New Haven Colony Historical Society by William Pardee. In recent years, the house has been closed to visitors because of lack of funds, but Miller explained that work was under way to repair broken water lines and deteriorated electrical wiring so that the house could once again be open to the public, at least on a limited basis in the summers.

Miller is a former banker with family ties to New Haven. As head of Orchestra New England, he helped guide that institution out of financial difficulties in 1990's and put it on the road to a secure future. He is determined, he told the gathering of some 60 neighbors at the ESMT meeting, to attempt to do the same for the New Haven Museum and the Pardee-Morris House. Miller has been a board member of the NHM for 3 years and was moved to the chief executive position in Decem-