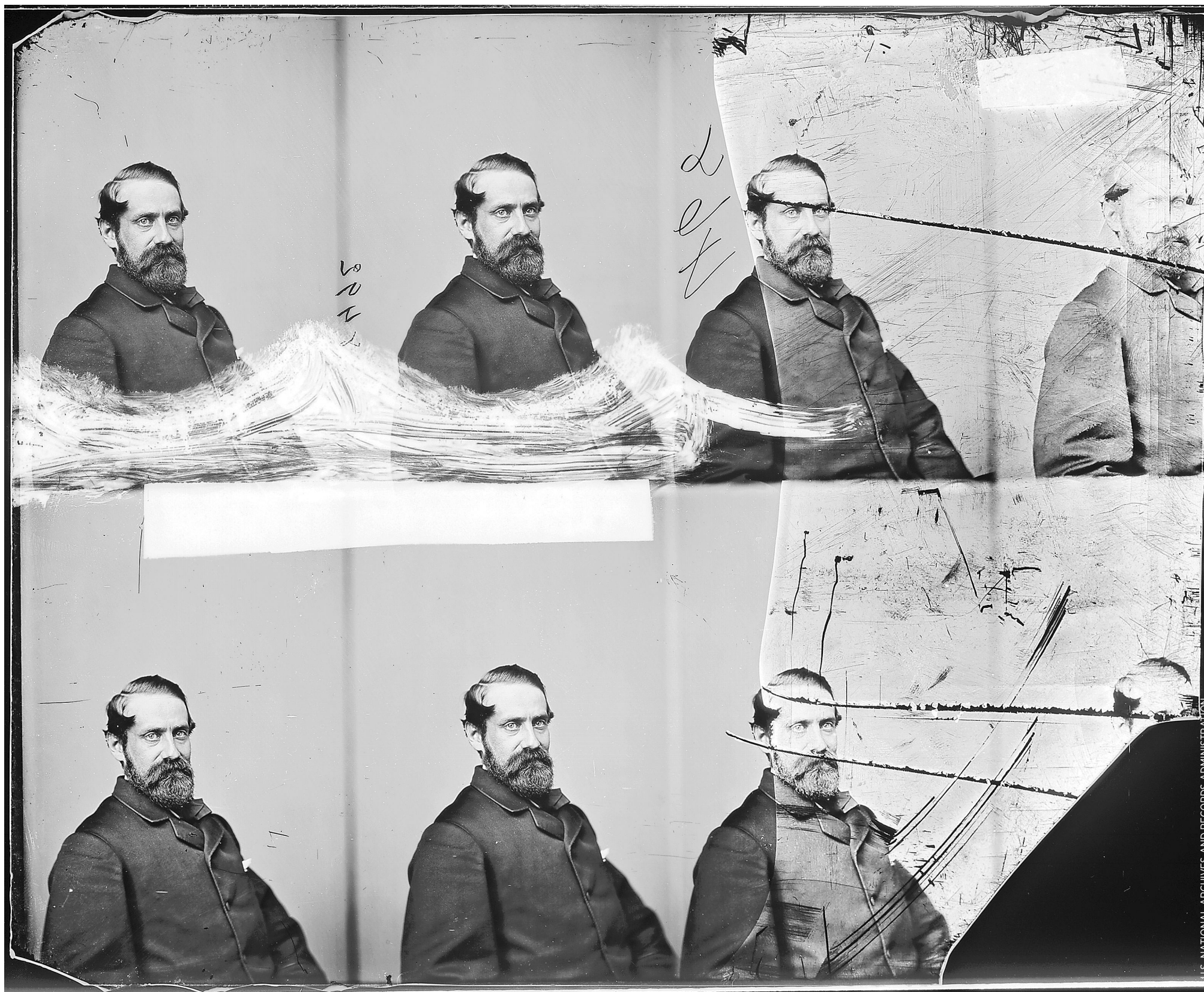


PERSPECTIVE



Heroes past

And their lessons for today's Black Lives Matter movement

By DARYL JUSTIN FINIZIO

AS HAS BEEN REPORTED in The Day, New London County Historian Tom Schuch recently uncovered evidence that Frederick Douglass spoke in the City of New London for the abolition of slavery in 1848.

Douglass, then a young activist and orator, stirred controversy and often scorn for his views that were at the time considered both too radical and indeed too dangerous. Similar charges are often levied at today's Black Lives Matter activists. Indeed, these same charges were made a half-century ago against the late Congressman John

Augustus Brandegee would tell today's public servants to just do what is right, so that years after they are forgotten, progress will have been made, and that alone is all that matters.

Brandegee, above, was a mayor of New London and later served in the U.S. Congress, where he argued for the abolition of slavery. The photos were made by Mathew Brady sometime between 1860 and 1865.

Lewis whenever he was off getting himself in some "good trouble." Great credit is due to historians, such as Schuch, and to local organizations, such as New London Landmarks, who have done so much to unearth and preserve New

London's history. History, left to its own devices, sadly, often forgets even the famous of their day. With the passing of time all travails, triumphs and tragedies of history's largest figures are slowly obscured and

forgotten. Such was the case with Mr. Douglass's New London lectures, and so too is the case regarding the record of a former Mayor of New London, Augustus Brandegee. Augustus Brandegee was a

lawyer and a magistrate judge (in a district court then called the Police Court) in the late 1850s. Holding court at what we now call the Custom House Museum, Brandegee's responsibilities included ruling on cases involving "runaway" slaves.

According to the federal fugitive slave act, in force at the time, these escaped slaves were to be returned to their owners. Rather than enforce the act, Brandegee took a different course. Brandegee asked the escaped slaves a simple question; "do you want to be a slave, or do you want to be free?" With little surprise, almost all answered that

SEE THE STORY PAGE B6

Give historic theaters a hand

In the wake of governmental relief programs that extended a lifeline for businesses to save jobs and survive the pandemic comes a request that the state create a \$10 million fund for Connecticut's historic theaters, including the Garde in New London. The theaters closed in March and gradually lopped off programming further and further into the future. The tickets they sold amount to a liability on their ledgers, although one they are glad to have. They have no rental income for anything from birthday parties to Broadway shows. Most employees were furloughed or laid off months ago.

The theaters are seeking enough life support so that they can emerge when



LISA MCGINLEY
l.mcginley@theday.com

COVID-19 loses its grip and help guide life back to something like normal.

With far more need than cash, can Connecticut afford to do that? Don't unemployment, food, rental and health care assistance come first? Can't the theaters — and other nonprofits — get enough help from donations?

It is a dilemma — unless we reframe the question.

Don't underestimate the economic recovery role of the Garde and its ilk.

The mayors of the cities that host the six theaters — Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, Stamford, Torrington and New London — and locally the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (SECTER) looked at the key role of the theaters in stimulating the economy. They support the proposal because their cities will need downtown entertainment, restaurant patrons and night life, not hulking empty buildings.

This kind of support is actually nothing new. The Garde and other early

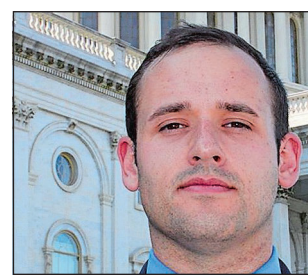
SEE DON'T PAGE B6

ELECTION 2020

Gilmer would help reinvigorate Eastern Connecticut's economy

By TOM GILMER
Eastern Connecticut has been plagued for over a decade by stagnant job growth and an ever-increasing number of residents fleeing the Constitution State. That, on top of an overly progressive agenda by state and federal representatives, has driven a further wedge between the upper and middle class.

As the Second Congressional District's federal representative, Joe Courtney continues to support bills that raise taxes nationally, as the flames of the once



GILMER FOR CONGRESS
Tom Gilmer

flourishing manufacturing and defense industry in Eastern Connecticut dim to an alarming flicker. Over a year and a half ago

my family and I decided that we needed to bring positive change to Eastern Connecticut and that change would only come if we could shake up the policies that for the last 13 years have put the Second Congressional District in last place. In a study published by the Yankee institute it was found that Connecticut has only recovered 80% of the manufacturing jobs since the economic recession in 2008. That number holds true even though the 2017 economic relief bill

SEE GILMER PAGE B6