

The Wintonbury Drummer



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

August 2011

Next meeting: September 7, 2011 7:00 p.m.

Location: Senior Center, 330 Park Ave., Bloomfield, CT

Program: G. Fox and Company.

Presenter: Elizabeth Abbe of the Connecticut Historical Society

Past Perambulations: Bloomfield Fish and Game Club

As soon as I turned sixteen, I joined the Bloomfield Fish and Game Club as a junior member. My father, Raymond E. McMahon, by then had belonged for over twenty years and served as secretary and president. He was a fisherman and taught me to fish. The Club has a pond, stocked every year, where members can catch trout. Sometimes we went on fishing trips. Several members owned a camp in Pittsburgh, New Hampshire, at the source of the Connecticut River, and we would go up there and fish in the lakes. Three times I went with my father and others to Jack Leavitt's camp in New Brunswick to fish in Canadian waters. My father and I enjoyed the company and the time spent outdoors.

I learned how to hunt at the Club. Tony Bongiovanni took me through the NRA hunting safety course when I was only fifteen. I learned how to handle a gun and how to prevent accidents. My love for the out-of-doors increased as I got out in the woods stalking game. Well before I joined the Club, back in the 1970s, the Club had begun buying land around its Clubhouse. Members had built the Clubhouse on Terry Plains Extension in the early 50s. Electricity was brought in during the 60s when Bob Bossler gave us a right-of-way through his property on Duncaster. Mike Nigro drilled a well for us. Ben Maulucci dug the pond. Today the Club owns 120 acres between Duncaster Road and Penwood Park. We preserve almost as much open space in town as the Wintonbury Land



Trust. Also, about the year 2000, the Club bought an additional 147 acres in East Granby on Route 187 at the Suffield town line. All these acres are preserved as open space and maintained for hunting. It was always a great day for me when I could walk through such unspoiled woods or sit in a tree stand watching for deer.

The Bloomfield Fish and Game Club, Inc. was actually founded back in 1938 by Ernest Ferraresso, Jr., Al and Bob Miller, Nick Maselli, Alf Anderson, and others. Many members' names are familiar to long-time residents: Al Attardo, Fred Fuss, Carl Miller, Frank Zito, Leonard Bull, "Pop" Ritson, George Shepard, George LaFreniere, and Walt Hill, to name a few. Meetings were held at the West Street Community Club House on Simsbury Road (now called the Southwest District School) and at the Old Duncaster School (Grange Hall) on Duncaster Road. Then for a few years, Joe Gozzo let the Club meet in his old log cabin on Stuart Drive (actually a summer home of Gov. Everett Lake in the 1920s). Ray Stewart was a member, as were Rudolph Kindl, Anthony Mazur, James Lamprecht, Andrew Federko, Ray Bourgoin, Anthony deFabio, Coz Petrunti, Andre Janet, and Everett Johnson. *(continued on pg. 3)*

NOTE: You are invited to fill this space! I'd like to see your memories, clippings, or excerpts from your reading. Hand them to me or send by fax, mail or email to rnpirce@hartford.edu and I'll edit them for the newsletter. There may be a limit of about 300 words.

Society Directory

PRESIDENT

Richard Pierce

VICE-PRESIDENT

Douglas Barnard

TREASURER

Charles Dechand

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Robert Whalen

SECRETARY

Winifred Granger

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Judy Dahlgren-Dechand

PAST PRESIDENT

Fannie Gabriel

Board of Directors

2012

Diana Barnard

Winifred Granger

Jean Perrault

Vacancy

2013

Judy Dahlgren-Dechand

Dr. Ralph Schmoll

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Vacancy

2014

Gregory Babal

Libbie Merrow

Gail Tinto

Vacancy

HISTORIAN

Frederick Hesketh

CURATOR

Fannie Gabriel

HISTORY CENTER CURATORS

Ralph & Louise Schmoll

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From the Curator's Corner

At the September meeting, I'll be reporting on how far afield we are offering genealogical assistance.

From 1949-50s clippings: At a Historical Society meeting on January 5, 1949, the program was about the district schools and was offered by Edna Woodford of Chester, VT, Mrs. Robert Capen of Simsbury, and two Bloomfield residents, Mrs. John Lagan and William Hubbard. President Jack Hooner noted that charter membership in the Society was to be held open until the Annual Meeting in March 1950.

In January 1947, there was a special town meeting held to consider changing the name of the town to Wintonbury. The idea was voted down.

Former names of streets and roads:

School Street: Barber Road

Scotland Road: Old Hartford Path

Wadhams Road: Sullivan Road

Tariffville Road: Granby Turnpike, Balf Quarry, Michelson Road

Blue Hills Avenue: Granby Turnpike

Adams Road: Bear Hill Road

Loeffler Road: North Burr Road

Burr Road: South Burr Road

Jerome Avenue: ?

Gun Mill Road: Wilcox Road, Hoskins Road

Iron Ore Road: Iron Ore Bridge Road

Mountain Road: West Street

Cottage Grove Road: Gillett Street, Mt. St. Benedict Avenue, Pipe Swamp Road

Newberry Road: Old Windsor Road

Terry Plains road: Old Windsor Road

Simsbury Road, Bloomfield Ave: Bissel St, Main St, Hartford Ave, Tunxis Ave

Fannie Gabriel (f.gabriel@att.net)

Fund Raising Events in October

An auction will be held in October . Early 1900s baseball photos, scads of New York theater playbills, dishes of all sorts, vintage clothes, thimbles and early sewing items, furniture, crystal, and more will be offered. Nothing less than fifty years old. Preview at 8:00 AM with auction to begin at 9:00.

On Saturday, October 2, we will have a table at Sacred Heart's car show. Publications and membership applications will be available.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

Send your check to the Society, P.O.
Box 5474, Bloomfield, CT 06002

\$15. Individual

\$25. Family

\$40. Supporting

\$150. Life

New members

Robert and Phyllis Berman

Kenneth and Anne Brock

Constance Clifford

Frederick and Jane McClaffery

Paula Marcus

Herbert and Ruth Bestor Messenger

Patrick and Kathleen Sullivan

James and June Swomley

Ellen Thomas-Jones

Our Publications

Wintonbury to Bloomfield (\$16.50), Images: Old Bloomfield (\$20., or to a member \$18.); History of the Bloomfield Catholic Church (\$15); **NEW** Bloomfield & the Civil War (\$12); **NEW** Not Lost ... Gone Before: A History of Latimer Hill Cemetery (on CD \$25); Barnard Genealogy (\$10.); Good Old Days (\$10.); Cook Book (\$7.); Over Tunxis Trails (\$5.); Bicentennial Activities (\$3); Note Paper (8 pk - \$3.); Filley House T shirts (\$12.); Brown Drums and Brown family (\$10.).

Board of Directors Highlights

At its meeting on August 17, the Board received a comprehensive financial report from Treasurer Charlie Dechand and a financial oversight summary from Assistant Treasurer Bob Whalen. The 2010-2011 was a good year financially. The auction and a bequest from the Cynthia Barnard estate added significantly to our income, which totaled \$14,115. Expenditures of \$9,747 included \$6,772 from the Hoff Fund (History Center costs). Utilities for the Old Farm School cost us \$1,119 and for the History Center \$2,125. Dues brought in \$1,830, very close to the totals in each of the past two years. "Supporting" memberships, at \$40 the highest category, fell from \$750 and \$705 in the past two years to \$440 last year—perhaps a reaction to increased membership fees instituted by the Board. Increases in "Individual" and "Family" memberships brought the total dues figure into balance.

President Dick Pierce read a letter from Town Manager Louie Chapman. Mr. Chapman said the stabilization of the Filley House has been completed, with the installation of new windows, repointing of the bricks, and replacement of the heating system. He inquired if the Society had any remaining interest in the building. Board members responded that, although we cannot spend any money there, we would like to tour the house and may want to make some use of it in the future.

Past President Fannie Gabriel called together a Fund Raising Committee, which met earlier in August. Various ideas were shared, but discussion centered around an auction to be held this fall. (See separate announcement.)

For the House Committee, George Merrow reported that Connecticut Natural Gas will install a pipe into the History Center at no cost to us. We will say goodbye to propane, but the conversion of our furnace will cost about \$900. Also, electrical work has been done in the History Center. The lighting upstairs and down has been improved, and the chandelier has been replaced by a circulation fan.

Winnie Granger, co-chair of the Collections Committee, stressed the need for volunteers to work on our collection: sorting and sifting to put things in better order. Diana Barnard is combining old inventory lists and will need help in checking to see that we have each item on the new master list. Diana, Gail Tinto, and others will be cataloging all our books. Ralph Schmoll, History Center Coordinator, reported installation of a new software cataloging program and said we will soon need volunteers to input all these kinds of data so that we eventually create a digital, searchable catalog of our holdings.

Memoir Class Planned

Your memories are unique and irreplaceable. They are living history which future generations will cherish. In this class, you will be able to start getting your memories down on paper. We'll do some exercises to fit the needs of class members, work on our memoirs, and share experiences. Help will be available in editing your work and getting it into the condition you want.

The class will be led by Richard Pierce, a retired English teacher. Classes will meet at the History Center. A fee of \$15 for members and \$20 for nonmembers is payable by the time of the first class. Up to four class sessions are planned, if needed, one per week.

Evening sessions will meet on Tuesdays starting October 18 at 7:00 PM. Daytime sessions will start Wednesday, October 19 at 10:00 AM. Please register for one or the other by emailing wintonbursociety@att.net or calling 860-243-1531 and leaving a message. Maximum enrollment is ten in each group, minimum three.

Past Perambulations *(cont'd from pg 1)*

Many of today's members are the second and third generation to belong to the club. For several years, one of my pleasures has been taking my daughter Shannon fishing at the club.

When I joined in 1980, dues were \$25 a year for Juniors and \$50 for Senior members. They're much higher now, of course, but those dues support the Club, its properties, and its activities. There are about 150 members, and new members are carefully screened. Our activities used to include a St. Patrick's Day Dinner every year. We still have a Fall Outing, a Christmas Party, and a spring Kid's Fishing Derby. Recently we staged a Ribs Cook-off, where teams competed for best recipe.

I've been in charge of grounds for over fifteen years and regularly organize work parties to keep the property in good order. The fellowship of other sport-minded men and the enjoyment of nature make it all worthwhile.

Note: Some material drawn from *Bloomfield Game Club: A History* by Rudy Kindl and Dick Greer, 1993.

George McMahon

Calendar of Events

2011

- Sept 7 **WHS Regular Meeting** - G. Fox Co by Elizabeth Abbe
Oct 8 **Old Wintonbury Cemetery** - Fall Clean-up 10:30 am to approx. 1:30 pm
Nov 2 **WHS Regular Meeting** - The Wide Awakes & the songs Lincoln loved - Mike McGarry

2012

- Feb 1 **WHS Annual Meeting**
Apr 4 **WHS Regular Meeting**
Jun 6 **WHS Annual Meeting with election of Officers & Pot Luck Supper**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

On Wednesday, September 7, 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, Elizabeth Abbe of the Connecticut Historical Society will be speaking on G. Fox and Company. Elizabeth is the Director of Public Outreach at CHS. She presents an enjoyable and informative talk on the days when G. Fox was the largest privately-owned department store in the U.S. The membership meeting and refreshments follow the program.

On Nov 2, Mike McGarry will bring his program, The Wide Awakes and the Songs Lincoln Loved, to the Senior Center.

President's Letter

Gene Plankey was a guidance counselor in the Hartford public schools. He and his wife lived in Simsbury in the Terry's Plain Road area; and, when he retired, they sold their home and moved to North Carolina. "Do you know anybody there?" I asked him. "No," he said, "we don't know anyone, but we like the place." I was surprised at his answer because I have always felt so at home in Connecticut.

When I was in graduate school in the Boston area, my wife and I often visited different churches on Sundays. One of those Sundays brought us to Trinity Episcopal Church in Copley Square to hear its well-known preacher. His text was Psalm 137, and I've never forgotten his message. Written during the Babylonian Exile, the psalm exclaims, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!" The sermon was all about Local Loyalties, that is, about consistent love for one particular place in preference to all others. Some people feel that way about a place, no matter how far they travel.

To members of the Wintonbury Historical Society, Bloomfield is a special place. We don't claim that we are better than other towns. We don't think we do everything right here. Some of us spent our childhoods here, and some arrived later in life. Some came as retirees and, through long habit, started supporting their new town and its people. What matters is commitment, loyalty, involvement.

I suspect that there's some inborn character trait at work here. Gene Plankey left Simsbury and had a happy retirement in North Carolina. Jean and I arrived in Bloomfield at while still young and sank such roots into the community that we would now be reluctant to leave. To us, local loyalties nourish and enrich a person's life. And isn't that what any local historical society is all about?

A good way to express commitment to our town is by supporting the Wintonbury Historical Society financially through membership. Even better is participation in its programs and activities.

Dick Pierce

Leaving A Legacy

The Wintonbury Historical Society is a charitable and non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historical sites of Bloomfield, and the memory of the ones who created them.

The Society is in dire need of funds or gifts in order to continue the restorations, and preservations in progress. We are therefore, soliciting the commitment of citizens who value the history of Bloomfield now and in the years ahead.

Listed are a few ways to leave a legacy:

1. Set aside a gift in your will to the Society
2. Name the Society as beneficiary of an insurance policy.
3. Remember your loved ones with a gift in their honor.
4. Name the Society as a beneficiary of your IRA or 401K.

There are several other means, just talk with your financial advisor.

Financial Development Committee