



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

April 2016

APRIL PROGRAM TO REVEAL LITTLE-KNOWN HISTORY

Proslavery Ideology in the North before the Civil War
with Dr. Sheila Culbert

Wednesday, April 6, 7:00 PM

First Congregational Church, Fellowship Hall

A Civil War historian, an ardent gardener, and an avid reader, Sheila Culbert is passionate about education and the importance of developing in students a love of learning. In this program she brings to us facts and stories about Connecticut history that are not often brought to light.

Culbert was born in England, grew up in a family of nine children, attended boarding school in Belgium, and received her undergraduate degree from the University of Nottingham. With her husband, Richard Wright, Sheila moved to the United States for graduate work at Indiana University. With Ph.D.'s in hand, they moved to New Hampshire, Sheila to teach at Phillips Exeter Academy and Richard to a faculty position in the Geography Department at Dartmouth College. After six years at Exeter, Sheila joined the History Department at Dartmouth.

In 2008, the Loomis Chafee Trustees appointed Sheila as the seventh head of school and president of The Loomis Institute. While teaching at Dartmouth College, she developed the course on the American Civil War which she now teaches to Loomis Chaffee School seniors.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Beeching February program, 2; Metacomet visit, 3; Old St. Andrews history, 4-5; Eggleston Redux, 5; Tale Sale news, 5; Annual Meeting date, 5; In Memoriam, 6; Board Highlights, 6; Genealogy Software, Part 1, 7-8

DIRECTORY**President**

Richard Pierce

Vice-president

Vacancy

Treasurer

Judy Dahlgren-Dechand

Assistant Treasurer

Winifred Granger

Secretary

Ronald Marchetti

Historian

Fred Hesketh

Board of Directors**2016**

Winifred Granger

Ruthanne Marchetti

Nicholas Panke

Vacancy

2017

Homer Guilmartin

Ralph Schmoll

Vacancy (2)

2018

Austin White

Elizabeth Merrow

FEBRUARY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTED HARTFORD'S BLACK MIDDLE CLASS

On Wednesday, February 3, Dr. Barbara Beeching spoke at Prosser Library in a program sponsored by the Wintonbury Historical Society. The meeting room was full, and the audience attentive, as evidenced by the questions asked.

In her historical research Beeching discovered that blacks had founded their own churches and schools in Hartford in the mid 1800's and her research at the Connecticut Historical society brought her attention the Primus family, a middle-class black family living in Hartford. She said that reading over 200 letters written by family members gave her a full insight into their lives. She related that the time period is one which saw the beginnings of the Talcott Street Congregational Church (today's Faith Congregational) in Hartford, with well-known pastor J. W. C. Pennington. [See more on Pennington in the *Wintonbury Drummer*, January 2012, p. 5] "The black community which centered on that church was literate and enterprising," she related. "Its people founded schools and purchased homes."



Text and photo by Fred Hesketh

Beeching told of one of the Primus children, Rebecca, who became a school teacher and went to Maryland after the Civil War to establish a school for newly freed slaves. Despite local opposition, Rebecca gathered the children and eventually built a schoolhouse for them. The lecturer then described Rebecca's brother, Nelson Primus, a talented artist who, despite difficulties, established himself as a portrait painter in Boston and San Francisco. His remaining paintings are highly valued.

The Wintonbury Drummer

is published five times a year by
Wintonbury Historical Society, Inc.
151-153 School Street, P.O. Box 7454,
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Tel. 860-243-1531
Email: Wintonbursociety@att.net
Web: www.bloomfieldcthistory.org

we
volunteers!

OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

Bloomfield Garage, 689 Park Avenue
Caruso's Auto and Body, 36 Tunxis Avenue
Geissler's Supermarket, 40 Tunxis Avenue
Sir Speedy Printing, 21 Old Windsor Road
Windsor Federal Savings, 54 Jerome Avenue

Photos by R. Pierce



Janet Baker with Elwin Joyce III and Allison Correa



Metacomet teacher Jennifer Frazier helps Luis Cauttolenc ring the bell.



Metacomet third grader Elwin Joyce III



Janet Baker with Legend Anderson and Tahlia Watson



Janet Baker and Tahlia Watson



Metacomet third graders eager to ask questions.

Metacomet Visit: On February 25 and 26 140 Metacomet School third graders and eleven adults visited the Old Farm School. WHS members Janet Baker and Shirley Thompson helped to host them.

Third grade teachers: Barbara Coppa, Jennifer Frazier, Lisa Lamenzo, Jennifer Manalio, Donna Mims, and Shannon Waterhouse



CATALOG OF CONGREGATIONS, #5 of a series

Old Saint Andrews Episcopal Church: The Word in the Wilderness

By the middle of the eighteenth century, New England's Congregational churches boasted not only the preponderance of the population but in many instances benefitted from a position as the only officially recognized Christian denomination. In Connecticut, as elsewhere, this included public taxes to support these churches or "societies" as they were termed. In the Scotland district of what would ultimately become Bloomfield, a group of individuals who professed allegiance to the Church of England (Anglican) chafed under laws requiring them to support Congregational clergy. Additionally, the Congregational church's strict requirement to attend sabbath services meant that those living in the remote Scotland district would have to cross the rugged ridge and ford the Farmington River to reach the South Society meetinghouse in Simsbury, a difficult trek.

In 1740 they organized themselves and announced to the Congregational church (now First Church, Simsbury) that they had formed their own parish—St. Andrews. Working in their favor was their relative isolation from Congregational authorities (the church's current tag line, "The Word in the Wilderness," alludes to this) and the fact that the local Congregational society was experiencing a period of internal dissension. The Scotland congregants also found support in the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, a British group formed to support Anglicans in the colonies.



1875 photograph

By 1743 a small meeting house had been built, located in part of what is now the church's cemetery, and a 50-acre glebe, intended to support a rector, was purchased. Two years later a freshly-minted clergyman, Rev. William Gibbs, arrived to take up his duties. Not only was he to minister to St. Andrews but he was also charged with serving Anglicans in thinly-settled Litchfield County. For the next two decades Gibbs labored to support his far-flung congregations, a task which ultimately took a significant physical and emotional toll.

Gibbs's successor was a young man named Roger Viets, a local resident who, after graduating from Yale, served as a lay reader assisting the ailing Gibbs. By 1765 he too had traveled to England for ordination (there being no Anglican bishops in the colonies) and like his predecessor, logged well over a thousand miles over the next decade serving fledgling Anglican congregations in Connecticut and Massachusetts in addition to his St. Andrew's flock. By the early 1770s Roger Viets found himself, like other Church of England clergy, in an increasingly sticky situation as relations between England and the colonies deteriorated. Throughout the Revolution Viets remained a staunch loyalist, and his political stand contributed to his being jailed in 1776 for aiding loyalists. Only the appeals of parishioners on both sides of the political divide managed to get him free on parole, to the relief of his suffering wife and children. While Viets and some parishioners remained loyal to the Crown, others in the church served the Patriot cause. Nonetheless, Viets ministered to them all.

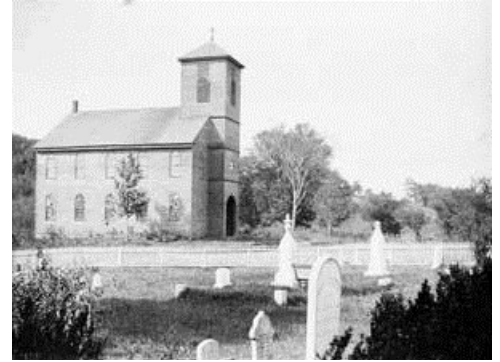
War's end found Church of England adherents cast adrift without political or ecclesiastical support. Within a few years Viets decided to migrate to Nova Scotia, where he served in a parish in Digby. In so do-

ing, like other loyalists, he left behind family and friends; a difficult decision. Two years after his 1787 departure the Protestant Episcopal Church in America was founded, providing St. Andrews with a new, American-based structure.

With a new century came the need for a new church building to replace the dilapidated 1743 structure. After years of discussion, it was decided to build the new church on a site several miles distant, at the corner of Duncaster and Terry's Plain Roads, ostensibly because of the belief that Wintonbury would develop its town center nearby. The new structure, embodying the neoclassical style popular in the Early Republic, was completed in 1807. Fast forward two decades and the parish decided that the building should be relocated back to the glebe and cemetery property off Tariffville Road. How the structure was moved is uncertain; it might have been dismantled and re-assembled, or it might have been moved largely intact on large rollers.

The nineteenth century found St. Andrews a parish in constant flux. Out-migration to the Western Reserve of Ohio contributed to population declines, and the establishment of other Episcopal parishes further reduced the parish rolls. St. Andrews weathered this period and slowly regained its footing under the guidance of a variety of clergy.

The glebe acreage dating back to the 1740s was ultimately sold to the power company in the twentieth century. Physical changes to the 1807 church building included a bell tower, victorian altar additions, and stained glass windows. A variety of building additions included a parish hall and classrooms for a growing church school program, particularly in the post-WWII period. Electricity made its first appearance in the church in the 1930s; and after WWII, the luxury of central heating was first introduced. A modest choir program sowed the seeds for the church's current impressive music program.



1889 photograph

Not only was the church's physical appearance changing, but so was its name. In 1952 Hartford's St. Andrews Church (now St. Stephens) moved to Bloomfield, leading to considerable confusion with the original St. Andrews. To solve this problem, a name change was approved by the diocese and in 1958 "Old" was added to the parish's name. Old St. Andrews embraced its new identity which, given the parish's long history, seemed most appropriate.

—by Richard C. Malley, OSA Historian

EGGLESTON REDUX

David French of Arlington, VA is by his own accounting the fifth great-grandson of Samuel Eggleston of Wintonbury Parish, one of the builders of the Old Farm School in 1796. A great history buff, he has been blogging about his Bloomfield roots (among others). His website address is www.frenchino.com and is probably the easiest way to access his blogs. He lists the following five as of local interest:

- [Home Sweet Home](#) (Eggleston-Spencer House)
- [John William Spencer - 1880's Connecticut](#)
- [You Fought in the Revolution - Prove it](#) (Sam'l Eggleston)
- [The Fowler's Postcards](#)
- [U.S. Grant's Connecticut Roots](#)

TAG SALE NEWS

The annual WHS tag sale will be held on Saturday, April 30, 8:00 to 3:00 at the Old Farm School. Call 860-242-3953 for vendor space.

ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK

The Society's annual meeting and potluck supper will be held at Sacred Heart Church on Wednesday, June 8. Supper: 6:00; meeting: 7:00; program: 7:30 to 8:30.

In Memoriam

Keith Hook died November 17, 2015 at age 98. He was a resident of Seabury. He served in the Pacific in World War II and during one period wrote a detailed history of the battle of Guadalcanal with carefully drawn topographical maps. In Hartford, he was president of the Board of Education and served in numerous other groups. An attorney with Connecticut Mutual Life, when he retired he studied music at the University of Connecticut. He was the husband of Alexis C. Hook, whom he married in New Zealand in 1944.

Nickolas Kotula of 493 Simsbury Road, an authority on antique furniture and a life member of the Society, died on January 6, 2016 at age 84.

Cyprien A. Cyr, 86, of Noank, formerly of Bloomfield, died January 22, 2016. He was the husband of Dorothy (Barnard) Cyr for sixty years.

Janet S. Thatcher, 88, died January 22, 2016 at Seabury. She was predeceased by her husband, Donald Thatcher.

Dr. Robert B. McComb passed away on January 22, 2016 at the age of 89. He was a resident of Seabury, having moved there from his home on Tariffville Road. According to his *Courant* obituary, Bob loved research of all kinds. He was an enthusiastic historian and wrote several books, including *The Word in the Wilderness: a History of Old Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1740-2000*. He was a clinical chemist for 35 years at Hartford Hospital and also wrote several scientific books. Bob was an outdoorsman and gardener and, said the *Courant*, "knew the trails and woods of Bloomfield like the back of his hand."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS

The Board met on March 16 with fourteen people present. The treasurer said her report was unusual in that we had more income than expenses for the period ending February 29. Income was \$4,766, and expenses were \$4,372. Of the expenses, utilities accounted for \$2,153, and \$1,060 was spent on maintenance and repair of the History Center HVAC system.

Ralph Schmoll has completed a video on the Filley House. It is on You Tube, and a link will be placed on our WHS website. The Board voted to accept recent acquisitions, which include gifts from Ned Mann, Sharon Corrigan Kowal, Sid Schulman, Barbara Long, George Grisevich, Kenneth Barker, Karen Miller Grant, Bonnie Bercowetz, Doug Barnard, and Paul Fox. The next exhibit planned for the History Center will be on Bloomfield's Sunset Sounds concerts, and it will open on Sunday, April 17 with guests and period music. Early June will be busy with Celebrate Bloomfield's History Day on June 6, the WHS potluck and program on June 8, and CT Open House Day at the Old Farm School on June 11.

A new WHS logo designed by Al LeFebvre was presented to the Board. Al was aided by his son, Neil, and his granddaughter, Marielle. Members of the Board expressed their thanks for a beautiful design. (It appears here in black and white, but will normally be blue and white.)

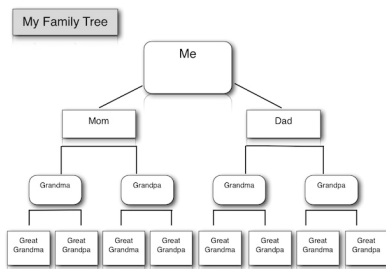


GENEALOGY SOFTWARE PROGRAMS by Jean Perreault (Part 1)

Genealogy applications provide a means to organize and record research results. Examples are names, dates, relationships, and events. Citations and sources should always be included to support the conclusions reached. Free programs require the use of the internet and browser whereas purchased programs standalone offline.

Free online genealogy sites have the advantage of automatically sharing your family tree information with others. However, this should never be the sole method that is used.

It is very important to regularly back up your research to your own storage device or to another website. Remember, companies can begin to charge for formerly free programs, or institute a policy that is unacceptable to you, or even go out of business. Information on living people should never be entered into an online genealogy site for privacy reasons since not all genealogy programs restrict access to this information by others. Eventually the researcher will probably want to produce some sort of report or charts. Reports and charts can be printed from some sites, but the free programs have few reports compared to the offline programs.



Information is researched and edited by the community at large on free sites. Any subscriber can change your family tree, which is one reason for maintaining an offline backup file. The ownership of your genealogical data generally passes to the site. Deletions may be possible but only for unmerged individuals unedited by other members. Also, GEDCOM [*Genealogical Data Communication*, used for exchanging genealogical data between different genealogy software] uploads are limited in size due to the necessity of merging individuals with others already on the site whereas offline programs generally have unlimited capacity.

When sharing information from your offline program, it is in display only mode. Remember all information is publicly viewable. Some sites allow information on living people. Only you can change the family tree, and you retain ownership of the genealogical data. You can delete your data.

FREE GENEALOGY PROGRAMS

Several free web applications will do a reasonable job for the novice or advanced genealogist. These include:

FamilySearch.org

Service is provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Printable fan charts, pedigree charts, and family group sheets are available. FamilySearch has the ability to send messages to other users working on the same individuals, but you cannot directly upload or download a GEDCOM. You have to load the GEDCOM into one of the free programs that syncs with FamilySearch (Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree or RootsMagic), then sync to upload. As you sync, you will be asked to resolve any duplicates. This may take considerable effort, but it prevents duplicates, and you may discover some additional information about your ancestors. Anyone can edit any record. You benefit from work done by relatives and other genealogists. However "your" tree can be messed up by a careless researcher, although changes can generally be undone. Some of the existing records have errors that may be difficult to straighten out. [Note: information is provided by many other genealogists, and its accuracy is dependent on the care taken by the people entering the information].

WeRelate.org

This is a *wiki* site similar to *Wikipedia* with the focus on family research. **WeRelate** is different from most family tree websites. It takes a shared approach to genealogy. By contributing to WeRelate you are helping to build a unified family tree containing the best information from all contributors. It has impressive source support. Attaching photographs and documents is easily accomplished. Trees can be deleted (except for articles already edited by others). However, **prominent ads** appear on the right side of the web pages and pose a distraction. Anyone with an account can make corrections or edits, and disputes are resolved by the site moderators.

WikiTree.com

This is a collaborative family tree site that has several levels of privacy which can be set individually for each person in your tree. It provides Ancestor Pedigree Charts, Family Group Views, Descendant Lists, Wikid Shareable Trees, Family Tree Widgets, Location Map reports, and Ahnentafel Ancestor Lists [*Ahnentafel displays ancestors from present to the past*]. However, there are no source citations for Name, Birth, Marriage, and Death events, a major drawback. Despite the Wiki reference in the name, this site doesn't have the same look and feel of Wikipedia. Neither individuals nor trees can be deleted.



shutterstock

Ancestry.com

This is not a collaborative site, (e.g. others have read only access to your data and the ability to attach notes). You can upload and download GEDCOM files and attach photographs and documents. There is no duplicate finder or manual merge ability. A recent review mentioned "that both links provided for Ancestry.com end up at the same page titled "Support Home." Ancestry is all about subscriptions and they are costly to maintain. Once your subscription runs out, so does your access to the information you've posted. Ancestry keeps sending "new clues/matches" as they come in but you can't see them unless you renew your subscription.

RootsWeb WorldConnect

RootsWeb.com is an Internet service owned and operated by Ancestry.com. Operations Inc. is a read only searchable site for uploaded GEDCOM files. None of the uploaded data can be edited. All trees are available to the public. This is not a collaborative site. **WorldConnect** defaults to treating people born after the latest publicly available US Census (1940) with no death information as living. Any GEDCOMS uploaded here will also be searchable and viewable on Ancestry.com. It requires a genealogy program to maintain the data and create GEDCOMs for upload to this site. WorldConnect **displays distracting advertising** next to your data including ads for Ancestry.com.

Ahnenblatt.com

This is free easy-to-use genealogy software for Windows. **Ahnenblatt** has multi-language support, graphical trees, auto completion function to avoid mistyping for input fields (birth name, places, occupation, religion), navigator to click through your ancestors, as well as full **Unicode** support [*Unicode is a computing industry standard for the consistent encoding, representation, and handling of text expressed in most of the world's writing systems*]. It provides GEDCOM support to import and export whole family in GEDCOM format for data exchange with other programs. It has a plausibility check that will find mistakes in your data with one mouse click. Another nice feature allows you to send an **Ahnenblatt** family file by email to relatives or friends. Also there is drag & drop support for opening family files or adding pictures. **No advertising** or spyware is included.



[Editor's note: The Society's laptop currently has installed on it Ahnenblatt, Legacy 8.0, My Heritage Family Tree Builder, and RootsMagic 7.0. These are free programs. To explore them, come in to the Bloomfield History Center and spend some time on the laptop. Call 860-242-7639 to set up a time. These "offline" programs will be discussed in the second installment of this article, to be published in the June issue.]