



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

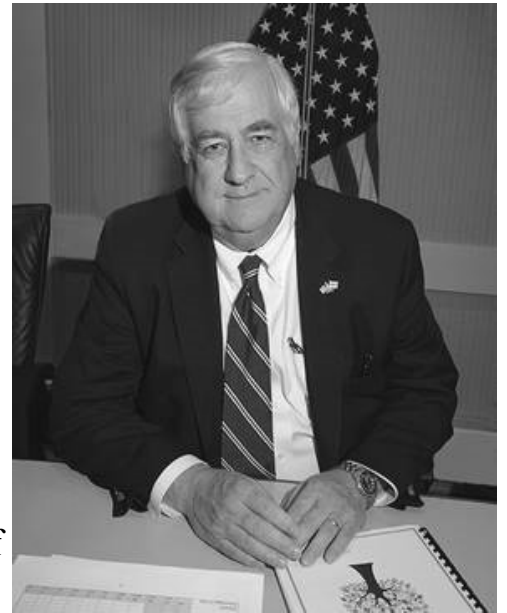
June 2015

TOWN MANAGER TO SPEAK AT WHS ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 3

Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Bloomfield town manager, will be speaking at the annual meeting of the Historical Society at Sacred Heart Church, 26 Wintonbury Avenue, on Wednesday, June 3, 2015. The evening will begin with a potluck supper at 6:30 PM, followed by the annual business meeting at 7:00 and the program at 7:30.

Schenck will be mentioning his family's connections with the Civil War and how, even today, families are aware of ancestors who were impacted by it. An avid history buff, he has long been fascinated by this period in our nation's past.

He will also speak about the town of Bloomfield yesterday and today and take questions from the audience about the current state of the town.



Mr. and Mrs. Schenck are Bloomfield residents and members of the Society.

Wednesday, June 3

Annual Meeting

Sacred Heart Church

6:30 PM Potluck Supper

7:00 PM Business Meeting

7:30 PM Program

Inside this issue: Page 2, Old Farm School Visit & Board of Directors Highlights; Page 3, Celebrate Bloomfield—History Day Program; Pages 4-8, Catalog of Congregations #1—Rehoboth Church of God; Page 8, Time to Renew Membership & In Memoriam

we
volunteers!

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STUDENTS VISIT OLD FARM SCHOOL



—R. Pierce photos,
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On March 25 and 26, about 120 Metacomet third-graders, together with their teachers, visited the Old Farm School. Their “teacher,” Mr. Pierce, reported that they were an inquisitive and altogether delightful group. Thanks to their great teachers at neighboring Metacomet School!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS

The Board met on Wednesday, May 13, with fourteen people present. President Richard Pierce reported that the final report on our Connecticut Humanities CTH) grant has been filed. Treasurer Judy Dahlgren-Dechand reported income from July 1 through April 30 of \$4,905. Included in this figure is \$916 raised at our Annual Tag Sale on April 25. Expenses for the same period were \$7,473. Of this amount, utilities amounted to \$2,561 (34%), and \$1,890 was disbursed from our CTH grant for website improvement. Judy thinks that, when dues come in during June, we should break even for the fiscal year.

Town manager Phil Schenck has suggested we give him a list of work that needs to be done on the grounds and he will see how much the town can do. George Merrow and the House Committee compiled a list including renewal of the walkway to the Old Farm School front door,

Continued on next page—>

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OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

Bloomfield Garage, 689 Park Avenue
Simsbury Free Library, 749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury
Geissler's Supermarket, 40 Tunxis Avenue
Sir Speedy Printing, 21 Old Windsor Road
Williams Service Center, 56 Tunxis Avenue
Windsor Federal Savings, 54 Jerome Avenue

(continued) building a ramp to its back door, new parking lot lighting, and removal of the in-ground fuel oil tank near the Old Farm School.

Austin White reported on his research involving an old list of burials at Mountain View Cemetery. It seems that the list, owned by Chris Britting, may well be the earliest extant record of burials at that site. White examined gravestones at Mountain View and also consulted findagrave.com to verify entries in the list.

The Board reaffirmed its support for printing extra newsletters and placing copies in the town hall, both libraries, the senior center, and in schools. The Society will be a participant in Celebrate Bloomfield Week and will have a table at the Old St. Andrews community picnic on Sunday, June 7.



TAG SALE 2015

D. Hubbs photos



HISTORY DAY, SUNDAY, MAY 31, NOON-4:00 PM

Come celebrate Bloomfield's rich history on Sunday afternoon, May 31. The Wintonbury Historical Society. The Wintonbury Historical Society will host several activities at The Old Farm School and the History Center, located at the corner of Park Avenue and School Street, beginning at noon. **Students of all ages** can join in brief sample lessons at the school, with old-time rhyming games and songs, table-top games, and even penmanship lessons using quills, fountain pens, slate and chalk. Assisting in these events will be kids and adults wearing colonial costumes. Children can participate in schoolyard games, songs, and activities such as hoop rolling, marbles, jacks, games, jump rope and more. The day will culminate with a tug-o-war at 3:30 pm. All are welcome and all activities are free of charge.

In the History Center, which will be open from noon until 4:00, will be **a special exhibit** that will include a pictorial display of buildings and unique places throughout the town. Numerous Historical Society publications will be available for purchase, including monographs that focus on Bloomfield's religious, agricultural, and transportation background, as well as a bicycle tour route of the town.

WHS will offer **three guided bus tours** of numerous Bloomfield antique properties. Approximately fifty sites will be pointed out and a brochure about the tour will be available to all participants. The History Center will have an exhibit about the houses to be highlighted on the tour. Tours will leave the Old Farm School parking lot at 12:15, 1:30, and 2:45. A docent will ride on each tour. Annotated maps of the tour will be available on each bus and in History Center for people who wish to drive themselves. Reservations are recommended. Call 860-243-1531 and leave your name and number in your party.

Brochures for self-guided **tours of historic Old Wintonbury Cemetery** will be available at the History center and nearby First Congregational Church. Not only are the grave markers fascinating in their artistry and in their styles, whose evolution can be traced throughout the grounds, but a vast array of Wintonbury's ancestral families, families that have lent their names to innumerable places throughout modern Bloomfield, can be found throughout the cemetery.



Libbie Merrow photo



CATALOG OF CONGREGATIONS, #1 of a series

Rehoboth Church of God: www.rehobothcog.org; email: rehobothchurch@comcast.net; 860-242-8335

The Rehoboth Church of God, formerly the Blue Hills New Testament Church of God, celebrates the 50th year of its existence through the faithfulness of God.

The church was founded by the late Reverend Dr. Peter Constantine Barrett and his wife Daphne Barrett in 1965. It holds the distinction of being the first Church of God in Hartford, Connecticut.

Rev. Dr. Peter C. Barrett migrated from Jamaica, West Indies, to the United States via England. In 1957, Reverend Barrett and his wife went to England where he was instrumental in founding a new congregation in Croydon. During a visit to the United States in 1962 Reverend Barrett visited Hartford and learned that there was no "Jamaican" Church of God in the city. He went back to England, resigned his pastorate, and returned to North America.

As a visionary, Rev. Barrett started house-to-house prayer meetings with his wife and son Andrew in their Sterling Street apartment. The church was officially organized at 69 Oakland Terrace in Hartford with the Barretts, Linette Coombs and Ruth Skyers. As the congregation grew, the Lenox Theater, located at the corner of Lenox Street and Albany Avenue, was rented for worship services; eventually, they relocated to the Vine Street School. Unfortunately, both sites were only available to the church in the evenings; and because the congregation thoroughly missed having morning worship services, after a few months they rented the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 79 Vineland Terrace. The first morning service was held at that location in June 1967 with approximately 25 members in attendance.

The first Church and Pastor's Council (Deacon Board) consisted of Rev. Terrence Debeatham, Rev. Fennis Huggins, Rev. Robert Skinner, and William Wolliston. As families such as the Birthrights, Colberts, Dwyers, Grants, Henrys, Huggins, McNicholas, Myries, Smiths and Wollistons joined the congregation, the membership increased.

Francis Colbert and her family (Barbara, Israel, Wesley, Shawn, Amber, Algeenon and later Dana) also joined the church and formed the first choir called "The Hartford Youth Choir." Andrew Barrett, affectionately called "Drew" (the only child of Pastor and Sis. Barrett) was one of the initial musicians who greatly influenced the choir's singing style. He was a gifted and skilled musician and songwriter. Sadly, his full potential was not realized, as he died at an early age in 1991.



79 Vineland Terrace

Motivated by his love for the Lord and passion for winning souls, Reverend Barrett served tirelessly. In large part, the church's growth can be attributed to his integral ministry in the community.

He found jobs and housing for incoming residents, provided loans from his personal funds to individuals who were in need, directed those with immigration issues to legal experts, and offered pastoral counseling. Lady Barrett complemented his ministry through her organizational abilities. In addition to her profession as a bank teller, she wore several "hats" such as church clerk, Sunday School Director, President of the Ladies Willing Workers Band (now Ladies Ministry) and bookkeeper for the Blue Hills Childcare Center for several years.

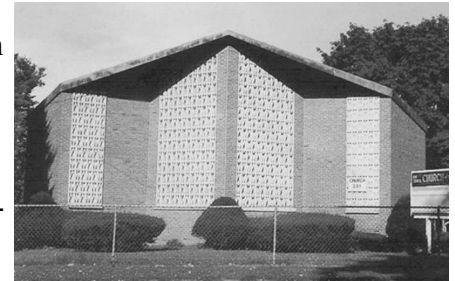
Rev. Barrett loved the young people. During summer breaks, he led them in door-to-door evangelism. The tremendous amount of time he invested into the young people stimulated their desire to work for God in the church. As a result, they played a major role in the purchase of the church's first bus. To raise funds, they charged the members and supporters of the congregation in exchange for services, such as household chores, yard work, and baby-sitting. Rev. Barrett taught the young people how to maintain a bal-

ance between the personal and the temporal. While they were eager to attend the spiritual activities, they also greatly anticipated a “treat” after. Following Young Peoples’ Endeavor (YPE) meetings or out-of-town services, Rev. Barrett would often pack them into his station wagon for a treat at McDonald’s. Under the tutelage of this great man, the youth were cultivated into various ministry leaders and musical producers.

As the congregation exceeded the building’s seating capacity, the need for a new facility arose. One day while he was passing the synagogue at 339 Blue Hills Avenue, Rev. Barrett prayed that God would give this building to the church. Consequently, faithful members and friends embarked on a fund-raising plan. In supporting his vision some pledged their properties as collateral while others such as Joscelyn Kelly, were among the first major monetary contributors. In 1975, Rev. Barrett’s prayer was answered and 339 Blue Hills Avenue became the new church home. The Lord added to the church membership and blessed the church financially. Its capacity for more community services increased. One of Rev. Barrett’s community outreaches included a weekly radio broadcast, with its opening line, “Hello, this is Pastor Barrett.” This was welcomed in the community each Sunday morning.

Rev. Barrett mentored several ministers including Fennis Huggins and Byron Peart, who currently serve as pastors in the Church of God. Carl Wilson, Rev. Barrett’s only nephew, and one of the writers and producers for the church’s album titled “Sold Out,” credits his passion for the music ministry to his late uncle’s gentle prod to “use the hymnal to write some songs of your own.” The Lord continued to bless the choir’s ministry and it became renowned through its extensive travels. Rev. Barrett then adopted the name “Spiritual Crusaders.”

Others influenced by Rev. Barrett’s ministry include Melinda DeBeatham, Christine Grant and the church’s first solo recording artist, Marcia McNichol-Nahounou.



339 Blue Hills Avenue

In 1979, Tom Coker, a new member to the church, with Rev. Barrett’s urging, established “The Peter C. Barrett Scholarship Achievement Committee.” Rev. Barrett was the first to contribute \$500 of his own money to the Scholarship fund. As a long-time supporter of education, he encouraged people to “strive to put something good into your head.” In an effort to fill the day care needs in the city, Rev. Barrett opened the Blue Hills Child Care Center in 1981 with Tom Coker serving as its first Executive Director. Bro. Coker also started an after-school tutorial/GED program, and was the sole instructor for a while.

In 1983, Rev. Barrett was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from South Eastern Theological Seminary in New Haven Connecticut. His wife and son along with other members of the church were in attendance. Rev. Barrett was the first black minister to be inducted (posthumously) into the Hall of the Prophets, a prestigious honor within the Church of God denomination. Although all of his “faith visions” were not realized in his lifetime, Rev. Barrett laid a tremendous groundwork for the momentous mortgage burning celebration which occurred in 1988. Reverend Barrett missed this significant event because he went home to be with the Lord on June 30, 1987.

At his home going service, Dr. Ray Hughes, former general overseer of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) preached a soul-stirring sermon entitled “A Man Called Peter,” honoring the life of this great servant of God. His wife, Daphne Barrett, remained an active part of the church until the late 1990’s when her health would no longer allow her to be active. She entered a convalescent home for several months, and on January 4, 2001, she went home to be with the Lord.

Rev. Barrett’s life epitomized that of a great man who has walked among us. His ministry has not ceased as men and women have taken up the torch of truth to help ignite the community. “The ministry of a true prophet of God does not cease with his death, but in fact should become the impetus for others to take up the torch and carry on....”

Reverend Dr. L.M. Wright (1987-1992)

The torch was passed to the Reverend Dr. L. Martin Wright following the passing of Rev. Barrett in

August 1987. Pastor Wright, his wife Sonia, and their four children Teran, Solange, Koga and Candace served the church with distinction. During Rev. Wright's tenure, the Lord added to the congregation. Rev. Wright had a burden for souls and an effective evangelistic ministry. He implemented the church's first tent crusade with Reverend W.A. Blair of Jamaica, West Indies, being one of the speakers. The success of the tent meetings resulted in a strong partnership with Rev. Blair who over the years has been involved with the church's annual soul winning crusades. In 1990, Rev. Wright supported the Spiritual Crusaders' live recording of their album entitled "SOLD OUT." Morris A. Scott served as co-writer and co-producer. Other singing ministries were also developed such as Ambassador for Christ, Blue Hills Gospel Choir, and the Senior Choir, which displayed the various singing styles of the church and enhanced the worship experience.

Paula Clouden pioneered the church's prison ministry in Somers, Connecticut. "The Better Way Substance Abuse" ministry was led by Hyacinth E. Lewis-Scott; and the Food pantry, directed by Elsa Smith and their faithful team continues to impact the community.

In February 1992, Rev. Wright was appointed Overseer of Southern New England and became the first black Overseer of a multicultural region. The building expansion project was birthed under his leadership and was later executed by his successor.

Reverend Dr. Jeremiah McIntyre (1992-1997)

The vision continues. In March 1992, the Reverend Dr. Jeremiah McIntyre and his wife Nysia Rose, accepted the mantle. The seasoned ministry of the McIntyres was introduced to the congregation. Like his predecessors, Pastor McIntyre was impassioned to evangelize Hartford. He was an exceptional teacher, a great communicator of the gospel, and a renowned musician.

Rev. McIntyre's love for the work of God propelled him to encourage those called to ministry to further their studies through the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP). Rev. McIntyre prophetically spoke into the lives of ministers such as Dannel Brown, Rohan Brown, Glen Colley, Derrick Henry, Maurice Huggins, Peter Jamison, Alford Miller, Byron Peart, Fabian Radway, Ronald Rhoomes, and Gerald Williams, to name a few.

The Lord blessed the church tremendously. Four worship services were held on Sundays, including Sunday School. Overcrowding became a challenge. However, the limited building facilities did not impede the community service ministries. Seeing the need for more space, the building renovation and ground-breaking service was held in 1997. Rev. McIntyre temporarily moved the church into the Lewis Fox Middle School for what was considered the "The Wilderness Season."

Rev. McIntyre was not privileged to see the completion of the building expansion project. He became ill and went home to be with the Lord on November 17, 1997.

In the remodeled building, Reverend Dr. Wallace Sibley (State Overseer) and Reverend Derrick Henry courageously led the congregation as Interim Pastors during this difficult period. Reverend Michael Mitchell, another local minister, also served as Interim Pastor. He prayerfully led the congregation until the Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Jackson was installed as the new Pastor in April 1998. Following the installation of Pastor Jackson, Rev. Mitchell founded the King's Chapel Church of God, Hartford Connecticut, where he is currently the Pastor.

Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Jackson (1998-1999)

Once again God sent to us another leader. Reverend Dr. Joseph Jackson served with his wife Elaine and two sons. He was a gifted orator of the gospel and an adept administrator. As the first Pastor of the newly renovated facility, located at 339 Blue Hills Avenue, he had the arduous responsibility of bringing the congregation back from the "Wilderness Season" and settling into the new building. The edifice was dedicated on June 13, 1998.



339 Blue Hills Avenue Renovated

Reverend Dr. Joscelyn A. Williams (1999 – 2000)

In 1999, the Lord saw it fit to send to us another shepherd in the form of Reverend Dr. Joscelyn A. Williams and his wife Norma. They are the parents of Sharon Williams-Jones and the grandparents of J'eanine, Donovan, David and D'Anthony.

As former missionaries, Rev. Williams and Lady Williams have an unabated love for the foreign field. They labored for years in Liberia, West Africa. In 2001, Rev. Williams led the church in adopting the building of a school as a mission project. It was completed and the Norma Williams Academy was dedicated in 2002. The Director of Missions, Reverend Madge Thompson, along with her team, was instrumental in implementing the project. Currently, the church's mission project is focused on establishing a community center for troubled teens on the island of Jamaica. The Church continues to support mission trips all around the world.

Out of a desire to provide individuals with a more intense study and application of the Word of God, Rev. Williams established The Peter C. Barrett Bible Institute in 2001 with the assistance of June Thomas, Christian Education Director. Rev. Williams appointed Rev. Marvyn and Sophia Walters as the first Youth Pastors of the church in 2003.

Rev. Williams continued the emphasis of "reaching the community," which was reflected in the church's motto: "A place to belong, a place to grow, a place to serve." Knowing that the Lord was leading, in 2003, the property located at 1170 Blue Hills Avenue in Bloomfield, CT was purchased.

In August 2005, the tent Crusade, Operation Compassion, was held and more than 400 families were recipients of the gospel, food items and health services. Presently many still continue to seek help from the church's food pantry located at 344 Blue Hills Ave, Hartford, CT.

As the Lord blessed the church, it was deemed necessary to find a new location that would foster greater opportunities for growth and ministry. Once again, the church had to relocate during another construction period. For one year the worship services were held at the Lewis Fox Middle School and then Quirk Middle School. But the Lord kept us during yet another "wilderness journey" as we experienced many challenges.

In 2003, land was purchased through the divine Hand of God. Following the land acquisition, the church secured architectural services and funded the new project by selling the 339 Blue Hills Ave. property and the adjacent owned properties. The construction of the 1170 Blue Hills edifice began in 2008.

The construction of the new church in Bloomfield, Connecticut, marked a new beginning for the church. Rev. Williams, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, changed the name of the church. Thus, the Blue Hills Church of God started a journey with a new name, "Rehoboth Church of God." Genesis 26:22—"For now the Lord hath made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land."

The celebration of the newly constructed edifice began on October 25, 2009. Rev. Williams and the church celebrated this new era of the ministry by marching from 339 Blue Hills Avenue to the new location, 1170 Blue Hills Avenue in Bloomfield, Connecticut, on October 31, 2009. The first worship service was held on November 1, 2009. The celebration culminated with the joyous dedication service on November 14, 2009. "Look what the Lord has done."

In November of 2012, Rev. Williams and his wife Norma retired from pastoral ministry to the next season of their lives. They now reside in Florida. Rev. Williams is the Emeritus Pastor of Rehoboth Church of God.

Reverend Jonathan Ramsey, Jr. (2012 – Present)

The Lord in His infinite wisdom had another visionary leader for Rehoboth Church of God in the person of Reverend Jonathan Ramsey, Jr. along with his wife Reverend LaVerne Ramsey. They have three children Ashley, Jonathan, and Nathaniel. Rev. Ramsey is a powerful preacher and teacher. Like the former pastors, Rev. Jonathan Ramsey, Jr. reaches out to the disenfranchised, those in



1170 Blue Hills Avenue, Bloomfield

crisis, and those needing to experience the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Under Rev. Ramsey's leadership, the church continues to grow in numbers. There is an air of excitement with new programs and structure in place. Through a fundraising effort, Rev. Ramsey embarked on a mission to complete the lower level of the church debt free. With the blessing of the Lord, the lower level was dedicated in January 2015 and is currently being utilized.

Sunday morning services are live streamed in the United States and other parts of the world. Souls are being reached through the medium of radio and television, as Rev. Ramsey enthusiastically imparts the Word of God.

We are keenly aware that even after 50 years the work of this ministry has only just begun. Our best years are yet ahead. We envision further expansion and spiritual growth souls are daily being added to the Kingdom of God.



Notes:

>The **Church of God**, with headquarters in [Cleveland, Tennessee](#), is a [Pentecostal Christian denomination](#). With over six million members in over 170 countries, it is one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the world. In the United States, it reports over one million members, making it one of the nation's largest denominations. The movement's origins can be traced back to 1886 with a small meeting of Christians at the Barney Creek Meeting House on the [Tennessee/North Carolina](#) border, making it the oldest Pentecostal denomination in the United States. (from Wikipedia)

>*Rehoboth* is a Biblical place name. In Genesis 26:22, after negotiating water rights with indigenous people, Isaac digs a new well and calls it "Rehoboth," saying, "For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

>The Society thanks Lakisha Hyatt and Marjorie Dwyer for their cooperation, expertise, effort, and community spirit that helped bring this article to publication.

Bishop and First Lady

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP!

The membership year runs from July 1 through June 30. The Society's annual budget supports its buildings, collections, publications, and work in the community; and membership dues provide at least 37% of the needed amount for this year. Please mail in your dues in the self-addressed envelope enclosed with this newsletter. Any increase will be helpful; for example, an individual may upgrade to a Family (\$25) or Supporting (\$40) membership. Do it today! Thank you.

IN MEMORIAM



Philip A. Schonberger passed away unexpectedly in April at his home in Old Lyme. A life member of the Wintonbury Historical Society, Phil previously lived on Simsbury Road in Bloomfield. He was known for his many philanthropies in the Hartford area. A graduate of Georgetown University and the Columbia University Graduate School of Business, he was named Hartford Business Journal Business Person of the Year in 1998. (*Hartford Courant* photo and data)

The Wintonbury Drummer solicits articles, personal reminiscences, book reviews, photographs, etc. from its readers. Materials for publication in the September issue should be received by August 9, 2015. Send directly to the President at 14 Julie Lane in Bloomfield or email in MSWord format to: Wintonbursociety@att.net.