



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

June, 2017

## DAVID LEFF TO TELL ABOUT PENWOOD PARK

**Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper on Wednesday, June 7**

**at Sacred Heart Church, 26 Wintonbury Avenue**

**6:00 Supper, 7:00 Annual Meeting, 7:30 Program**

Penwood State Park in Bloomfield stretches along most of the town's western boundary, yet too many townspeople don't know how these acres came to be preserved. On June 7, the Wintonbury Historical Society will present the answer when Connecticut essayist and poet David K. Leff speaks on "The World of Curtis Veeder: Inventor who Created Penwood Park."



Leff, former Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, is a writer whose work focuses on the surprisingly intimate relationship of people to their built and natural environments. His nonfiction book, *The Last Undiscovered Place*, was a Connecticut Book Award finalist. He is the author of three other nonfiction books and four volumes of poetry. His writing has appeared in *The Hartford Courant*, *Yankee Magazine*, and other publications. In April of this year he was the leader of the Penwood Poetry Hike.

This event is open to the public and free of charge. Simply bring a dish for the potluck and your curious mind. We will be meeting in newly-redecorated Father Picher Hall at Sacred Heart Church.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS

The Board met on May 17 with nine people present.

President R. Pierce reported that he obtained some software called GroupMail which should make it easy to send email to the entire membership (currently 125 addresses out a membership of 225). He would like to try sending the September *Drummer* both by email and surface mail.

The treasurer's report for April 30 showed total income of \$7,907 for the year to date and expenses of \$11,214. Large expenses this year have been the town-wide mailing and the painting of the History Center. Utilities have cost \$3,298 for the ten-month period. The Board approved the withdrawal of \$4,622 from our Vanguard funds, the same amount those investments earned in 2016. After much deliberation, Judy has put together a balanced budget for the current year, 2016-2017. It anticipates \$13,000 of income and \$13,000 of expenses. The Board accepted both the budget and the treasurer's report. Additionally, Judy reported that \$870.61 was the total income from the Flea Market on April 29. The two largest parts of this were \$575 from vendors and \$212 from the Bake Sale.

As to fund raising, the Board reaffirmed that we should be asking for donations from those who attend programs, especially those which cost money. Also, a committee was named to look into the possibilities of holding a raffle.

Again, the need for additional volunteer help was stressed. Two areas of need are computer data input and cleaning our buildings. Other discussion, about Celebrate Bloomfield and the Fannie Gabriel event, is covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

(Right) The annual Flea Market and Bake Sale on April 29 raised \$870 for the Society's needs.

—Janis Langston photo



## *The Wintonbury Drummer*

is published five times a year by  
Wintonbury Historical Society, Inc.  
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## 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  
*(And there's room for more!)*

## LETTERS TO THE DRUMMER

Dear Drummer,

My wife Carolyn and I enjoy *The Wintonbury Drummer* issues. As lifetime members of the Society, we consider it a privilege to be kept informed of your activities.

In response to the mystery of various street names [in the April issue, page 7], I comment on two—Jolley Drive and Rockwell Avenue.

I've always assumed that Jolley Drive was named for Betty Jolley, the town's former Town Clerk who lived on Oxbow Lane. Many of the Society's active members would have known her and can correct me if I'm wrong.

As to Rockwell Avenue, my wife, Carolyn Rockwell Jones, is related to the Rockwell family for whom the street is named. Joel Rockwell (1772-1839) was the sixth generation of Rockwells in this country. His farm included not only Rockwell Corners [on Blue Hills Avenue], but Rockwell Avenue as well. His son, Joel (1796-1869) is buried in Mountain View Cemetery. In succeeding generations, other Rockwells would make some notable achievements. Ninth-generation John Warner Rockwell (1857-1932) founded the J. W. Rockwell and Sons Company, a box factory. Tenth-generation Walter Gordon Rockwell worked in the box business and later taught and coached at The American School for the Deaf for forty-one years. The ASD Girls' Gym was named the "Walter C. Rockwell Gymnasium" in 1957, a year after his retirement.

On a further note, I had assumed that Carpenter Lane was named after Sherm Carpenter and his family. Sherm was a "big gun" in the Bloomfield picture back in the 1950s. Perhaps Society members could confirm my memory.

—from Jerry Jones, Steele Road, West Hartford



Dear Drummer,

In regards to Schuyler Lane, off Simsbury Road, "Fox Run" was the original name of this tract of land, chosen by the developers who also picked me to be their Real Estate Sales Manager. When I reviewed Tai Soo Kim's architectural plans for the eighteen homes which were to be built on that land and saw how beautiful this planned unit development was going to be, I thought it needed an elegant name, so I said to the developers, "Why not Schuyler Lane?" (Schuyler was the name of their company.) They agreed. And so it came to be, and I became the listing agent of all eighteen units and sold the majority of them, one of my finest moments in real estate.

—from Joy Glassman, Carnoustie Circle, Bloomfield

Dear Drummer:

Thought some of the following info might help with the origins of street names. Nolan Drive was named for the foreman when the Mountain Dale Homes were being constructed in 1965. These include homes on Newport Drive, Nolan Drive, Brewer Drive, and Raleigh Circle. Cobey Road was named for Cohen and Beman. Dr. Morris Cohen owned the land and Leonard Beman developed it. Both Cohen and Beman lived on Terry Plains Road at the time. Barnard Lane surely was named for the Barnard family (Leon Barnard?). Carpenter Lane may have a connection with the Carpenter and Chapman store which sold farm and construction equipment on Tunxis Avenue near where the empty hardware store is now (See Jerry Jones' letter above).

—from Elaine McKay, Newport Drive, Bloomfield





# CATALOG OF CONGREGATIONS, #11 of a series

## St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 590 Bloomfield Avenue

St. Stephen's began in 1908 as the Albany Avenue Mission in a building erected to be the parish house at 14 Lenox Street, Hartford. The parish was organized and admitted to the Diocese as St. Andrew's Church in 1910. During a capital funds drive of the Diocese in 1950, Frederick Roff, who lived on Cottage Grove in Bloomfield, gave the land on the northeast corner of Cottage Grove Road and Bloomfield Avenue for a church. St. Andrew's had been experiencing a drop in membership at its location in Hartford, and was offered the property.



1952 photo

From WHS archives

In 1952, the parish moved to Bloomfield, having built a new church and having sold the Hartford property. In 1961, the name of the parish was changed to avoid the confusion caused by the fact that there had already been a St. Andrew's in Bloomfield (now Old St. Andrew's). St. Stephen's has been blessed with the Endowment Fund from the Eleanor Clifton family and a Reserved Fund of a bequest by the Austin Family made when St. Stephen's was St. Andrew's in Hartford.

On Wednesday, July 8, 1993, lightning struck St. Stephen's steeple, causing a fire that nearly destroyed the building. According to the *Hartford Courant*, on the Sunday after, the charred, smoky remains of the rafters lay in confused heaps on the pews. A smoky smell wafted through the sanctuary and nave, diluted by air and light coming in from the gaping hole in what was once the roof. Water-soaked Bibles were set open to dry on the altar railing. About one hundred parishioners gathered on the church lawn that Sunday morning to grieve and express faith that the church would be rebuilt. On Monday, diocesan officials, an engineer, and insurance adjusters toured the site to assess the damage. The congregation would continue its worship for the next several months in the chapel of nearby St. Thomas Seminary, one of several spaces offered to them by local churches. In those first few days, contributions, many unsolicited, began to come in from local citizens and congregations, even from strangers driving by. Encouraged by this show of support and by parishioners' resolve to rebuild, Rev. Wayne Riley, pastor, said a building committee would soon be established. The reconstruction was complete and the building reopened on November 27, 1994, the first Sunday in Advent, traditionally the first Sunday of the Christian ecclesiastical year.



1958 photo showing addition

From WHS archives

Holy Eucharist is the principal worship service and is celebrated at 8:00 and 10:00 during the year and at 9:00 A.M. during the month of August. There is church school for the youth at 10:00 A.M. every Sunday and Bible study on Wednesday for adults. The church has a small choir, but a powerful Austin organ, which is kept in excellent condition. There is a vestry of eight members who assist the priest in the oversight of the church. (—> next page)

Over the years the membership has decreased, and in 2004 the Reverend Canon Wilborne Austin has been keeping those few members who remained and recruiting some new members. Average attendance fluctuates, but recently has been about eighteen at the 8:00 service and about 80 at the 10:00 service.

The following are some of the clergy and their years spent at St. Stephen's:

Rev. John S. Rogers, five years  
 Rev. Thomas Gardner, three years  
 Rev. Richard W. Gray, twelve years (1970s+)  
 Rev. Deena Galantowitz, six years  
 Rev. Roger Alling  
 Rev. Wayne Riley, four years (1991-1995)  
 Rev. Barry Miller (cited by Courant in 2001 as vicar; still there 2003)  
 The Rev. Canon Wilborne Austin, 2004 to the present

Thanks to Canon Austin for supplying most of the material in this article.

Other sources:

Nakashima, Ellen, "Church has faith to rebuild after fire," *Hartford Courant*, July 12, 1993, p. C1.  
 Dee, Jane Ellen, "Position reduced, pastor moving on to New Jersey post," *Hartford Courant*, February 14, 1995.



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church today.  
 R. Pierce photo

## ANGLICAN OR EPISCOPAL?

The sign in front of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church identifies it as both Episcopal and Anglican. Both terms are used because, although the church is part of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, many of its members are from Jamaica and the Caribbean, where Anglican is the more common designation.

The Anglican Church was created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Henry VIII, while the Episcopalian Church was established in the U.S. by Samuel Seabury in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Episcopal Church came into existence as an independent denomination after the American Revolution, when the United States was busy separating itself from all things English. (Remember Noah Webster's new dictionary of American English, trying to do the same thing.)

*The New York Times* reports that the Anglican Communion, with about 85 million members in 165 countries, is the world's third-largest body of churches after the Catholic and Orthodox churches. It has its roots in the Church of England, whose missionaries planted churches around the world. "Episcopal" and "Anglican," thus theoretically refer to the same entity. However, recent years have seen differences arising in the United States. Certain divisions in the church have led the American public to attach the meanings to the words *Episcopalian* and *Anglican* that they actually bear in American usage: namely, that to be an Episcopalian means to be a member of a pro-gay, autonomous American denomination, more liturgical than most churches but firmly within the theological orbit of liberal Protestantism. To be an Anglican, by contrast, means to be part of a conservative evangelical church with bishops, connected somehow with Africa and opposed to homosexuality. The definitions have by now become quite distinct and firmly fixed in the national lexicon.

Duke Divinity School student Jordan Hylden writes, When I get asked—as I undoubtedly will—whether I'm Anglican or Episcopalian, what will I say in reply? As of right now, believe it or not, I still think that my answer can and should be, "Both." And that answer, he says, is dependent upon being able to hope that Anglicanism actually means something beyond the local and the ad hoc; that there actually is, in fact and not only in theory, a global fellowship of Anglican Christians committed to the creedal faith and to common prayer, worship, and reading of Scripture. Hylden concludes, I can't accede to what the words have come to mean in their near-universal American usage.

Sources:

"Anglican or Episcopal?", by Jordan Hylden. *First Things*. [www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com). Accessed May 16, 2017.

"What is the Episcopal Church?" [www.anglicansonline.org](http://www.anglicansonline.org). May 15, 2017.

"The Differences Between the Anglican Church and the Episcopal Church." [www.differencesbetween.net](http://www.differencesbetween.net). Accessed May 16, 2017

"Anglican Church Disciplines U. S. Episcopalians Over Gay Marriages." By Kiiko DeFreytas-tamura and Laurie Goodstein. *New York Times*. Jan. 15, 2016. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). Accessed May 16, 2017

## IN MEMORIAM

**Beth Steingiser**, 90, died on December 7, 2016. Beth was predeceased by her husband, Samuel, and leaves a daughter and two sons. A registered nurse, she also gave countless hours volunteering for many organizations and was co-founder of the Connecticut Chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America.

**Doris Ahrens**, 90, died January 8, 2017. She was the widow of Bendix Charles Ahrens and leaves three sons and two daughters. She was a traveler, camper, bowler, knitter, and for thirty years treasurer of the Bloomfield Center Fire District.

**Allen Beebe**, 89, died January 7, 2017. He was on the Loomis-Chafee School history faculty for forty years and coached baseball and other sports. He leaves his wife Barbara, two sons, and a daughter.

**William Mandelbaum**, 77, died April 10, 2017. He was a long-time engineer with Hamilton Standard and recipient of the United Technologies' President's Award in recognition of his career achievements. He leaves his wife, Ruthanne, and a son and daughter.

**Juris Zars**, 83, died April 11, 2017. He had a long career at Bloomfield High School as a math teacher and department chair. A veteran of the U.S. Army, he was active in the First Congregational Church and in many local groups. He was predeceased by his wife, Linda, and leaves behind a son and a daughter.

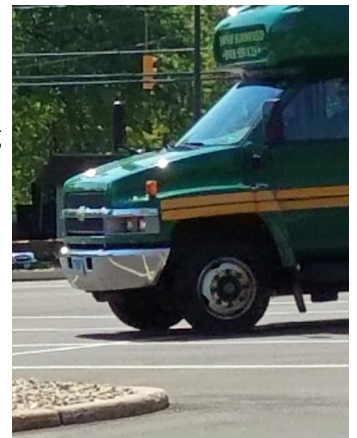
**Dorothea Nordstrom** died April 21, 2017 at age 100. The widow of Walter Nordstrom, Dot had lived in Bloomfield for 69 years and was a life member of the Society. She leaves a son and three daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## CELEBRATE BLOOMFIELD 2017 BUS TOURS ANNOUNCED

The focus of attention of this year's tour of Bloomfield on June 4 will be "The Transition from Wintonbury to Bloomfield." As Connecticut's earliest settlements organized in association with individual religious congregations, towns grew up with a concentration of relatively few multi-generational families farming self-sufficient tracts. Substantial houses, sharing many elements that we today consider classic colonial design, dominated the landscape, and many of these, because of their size, robust construction and, often, the importance of the families who lived in them, survive today. More modest buildings, such as workers' cottages and agricultural outbuildings, tended to disappear with the passage of time.

Eventually, and perhaps inevitably, the Parish of Wintonbury became reorganized in 1835 into the Town of Bloomfield. With the advent of nationhood and self-government, as well as the growing influence of the Industrial Revolution, there emerged a trend that decentralized some of the large farms and separated generations more frequently into single family living arrangements. There is an increasing specialization of labor as well, which fostered the ability to build dwellings on smaller sites, since the need for each family to be self-sufficient was diminished. These trends are reflected in the town's architecture of the mid 1800's. There are numerous surviving buildings from the period, most of which, unlike the exuberant confections blossoming just a few miles to the south in Hartford, elicit a subtle extension of the town's early roots. On this tour, we will look at several examples of architecture that bear witness to the "steady habits" that transported Wintonbury through its transition to Bloomfield.

--Ron Marchetti





## TANTALIZING BLOOMFIELD STREET NAMES, Part II

The April issue of the *Drummer* featured several local streets named with family surnames. Thanks to those who wrote in (see page 3), but more work still needs to be done to identify the persons streets are named after. In this issue, we'll look at streets using first names. Here are some identifiable examples:

Cary Lane. Named for George Mead's wife, Cary (in Balbrae area)

Francis Way: First name of Francis Gillette (in Gillette Ridge area)

Oliver Way: Named after Oliver Filley (off Filley Street)

Walt's Hill: Named after local contractor Walter Hill of Tunxis Avenue (off Adams Rd.)

There are many more first names used for streets, the origin of which remains unknown. The *Drummer* solicits readers' help in uncovering such origins. Please write to us (P.O. Box 7454 or [wintonburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:wintonburyhistory@gmail.com)) . Here are thirty-eight to challenge you:

Alexander Road

Alfred Drive

Alice Drive

Andrea Lane

April Way

Arthur Drive

Ashley Court

Barry Circle

Beatrice Avenue

Cindy Lane

Claire Lane

Cyrus Lane

Dale Avenue

Daniel Boulevard

Diana Drive

Dorothy Drive

Douglas Street

Dwight Street

East Harold Street

Eliza Way

Elizabeth Avenue

Evan Lane

Fern Drive

Florence Road

Jeffrey Lane

Jonathan Place

Joyce Street

Kelsey Place

Louis Drive

Lynn Circle

Marguerite Avenue

Mark Lane

May Lane

Norman Drive

Richard Lane

Rita's Way

Sandra Drive

Sharon Road

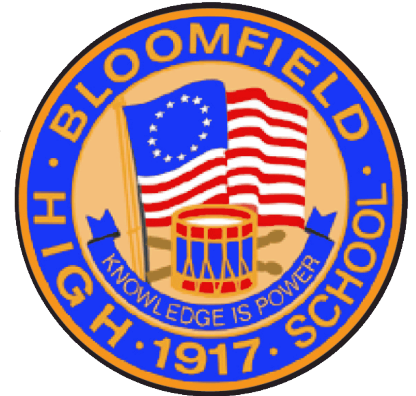


Left: Nick Panke of the WHS Board of Directors holds the new sign prior to installation by Bloomfield's Artfx at the History Center on May 19. The official renaming was held on Sunday, May 21. —Janis Langston photo

## BEFORE THERE WAS A BLOOMFIELD HIGH

Bloomfield High School will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an event currently scheduled for Saturday, September 16, 2017. According to Jill Naraine, Assistant Principal, the graduating class of 1960 is planning its reunion, or “birthday party,” for Thursday of that week and will help observe the anniversary.

The September 2016 *Drummer* reprinted two paragraphs from the 1983 book *From Wintonbury to Bloomfield* which described the beginnings of secondary education in Bloomfield. Prior to 1916 and going all the way back to the 1700s, students graduating from the eighth grade had to go out of town to get a high school education (as is still the case in some Connecticut towns). A student might, for example, attend Hartford Public High School, boarding with a family near the school during the week. So for several generations of Bloomfield children, HPHS (or another high school) became their alma mater.



R. Pierce photo

HPHS archivist R. J. Luke Williams writes, “Although we know the Hartford Public High School as a large urban high school, historically, enrollment was small for many years. In its transition from the Latin School of Thomas Hooker’s days to the Hartford Grammar School, there were not many students, even after it was open to women in 1847. Six young men graduated in the Class of 1848, but there were no women. By the end of the Civil War, however, there were 22 graduates in the Class of 1865: nine women and thirteen men. Four years later the size of the 1869 building, enlarged in 1877, tells us about increasing enrollment for those years.

“Regardless of fluctuating enrollment, the second half of the 19th Century was a grand period for the Hartford Public High School. Yale received 58 HPHS grads from 1848 to 1865 and 65 HPHS grads from 1866 to 1892. There were 16 HPHS grads that went to Yale from the Class of 1892. The Class of 1892 was a remarkable one, and the HPHS Archive has documentation and artifacts from that period. There were 65 women and 39 men who graduated in 1892, and the Dorothy Clark Archibald and Ferguson Gilman Clark collections [in the HPHS archives] provide a glimpse of life in Hartford in the 1890’s.”\*

In September 1916, with some renovations to the Jerome Avenue School, the first high school classes were offered in Bloomfield. While there had been a ninth-grade class briefly in 1913, now Bloomfield High School was permanently established.

\*from *Friends of The Hartford Public High School Museum & Archive Newsletter*, Vol. 11, No. 2, May 2017. ed. R. J. Luke Williams.

## DON'T MISS THESE BLOOMFIELD HISTORY EVENTS!

- √Sunday, May 21, 3:00 to 5:00 PM, Dedication of the Fannie R. Gabriel History Center, 153 School Street. Speakers: Philip Schenck and Roberta LaMonaca, about 3:45.
- √Sunday, June 4: Bloomfield History Day bus tours, noon to four, History Center
- √Wednesday, June 7, 6:00 to 8:30 PM, potluck supper, annual meeting, and program (see page 1)
- √Saturday, June 10, Connecticut Open House Day. WHS buildings open to the public 11:00 to 3:00.
- √Wednesday, September 6, time and place TBA: Kevin Strait, curator of African-American Collection at the Smithsonian Institution.