

# The Wintonbury Drummer



## *Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society*

*Bloomfield, Connecticut*

*April 2001*

*Next meeting: Wednesday evening, 7:30 p.m., April 4, 2001*

*Methodist Church: School Street and Wintonbury Ave., Bloomfield*

**Program:** Kevin Johnson will give a living history performance, interpreting the experiences of African American Civil War soldier William R. Webb of Hartford

### *President's Message:*

The April 4th meeting will present a really interesting program: Kevin Johnson, Bloomfield resident, will provide a fascinating Civil War re-enactment.

Thanks to the local publications for spreading the word – the Bloomfield Journal and the Hartford Courant – I trust our members are aware that in February, the \$18,000, which had been requested to repair the Southwest District School with a grant from the Connecticut Historical Commission, was voted by the Connecticut Bond Commission. It now should be possible for a permanent, rather than a temporary, roof to be put on.

Also, through the efforts of dedicated committee members, the remainder of the papers necessary to secure the \$200,000 Urban Renewal grant will be filed.

The Old Farm School soon will be open, and Mary Murphy needs docents! For all the projects, we always appreciate everyone's help and are always in need of extra hands.

I noted that the recent Connecticut Humanities Council calendar mentioned Judi Sitkin's Historic Bloomfield Bicycle Tour. She is also working with the Bloomfield schools through her Education Committee. More about this and more at the April 4th meeting. We hope to see everyone there!

Fannie Gabriel, President

## The Grant House and Gardens Open House on June 3, 2001

The Wintonbury Historical Society invites you to a Gala Reception and Tour of THE GRANT HOUSE AND GARDENS at 77 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield. Don and Jan Baker, current owners, have offered the use of their house for a fund raising party for the Filley House Restoration Fund. The event is on Sunday, June 3, 2001 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person and will include a tour of the house and gardens and champagne, wine and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets will go on sale about April 1 and will be available at the April meeting. Members will be asked to sell extra tickets if they are able to do so.

In 1723, a saltbox was built at what is now 77 Maple Avenue. In 1823 a traprock house was added to the saltbox as a wedding gift to David W. Grant who was originally from Franklin, Pennsylvania. The stone house was built in the Greek revival style. The stone foundation is over three feet thick and the first and second story walls are two feet thick, narrowing to 15" in the attic. The house has a number of distinctive architectural features including the large leaded fan window on the front gable, high ceilings with wide plaster moldings, pocket doors and floor to ceiling windows in the front rooms. The original seven room were heated by six stoves placed directly in front of the wooden mantels. Captain David Grant organized and was first president of Hartford County Mutual Fire Insurance Company. He was a member of the legislature in 1814, State Senator and Moderator of the first Town Meeting in 1835. In 1829 Captain Grant agreed that his house would be a work house to send "poor idle persons to" and Grant agreed not to charge more than one dollar per week per person; until another house could be appointed by the town.

Taking care of the town's poor was one of the first steps in the process of establishing Bloomfield as a town. In 1843 this house and the land around were sold to Martin Burr, Jr. It remained in the Burr family until Ida J. Burr married George Franklin Humphrey of Canton and settled at the Grant/Burr farm. Their son George Harold Humphrey, who married Bertha Gerris of Simsbury Road, lived here his entire life until 1969, running the farm as a dairy business. Their two children, George F. Humphrey and Elaine Humphrey Meader, were well known in Bloomfield. In 1935 and still lacking indoor plumbing, the home underwent a major renovation. The old saltbox was razed and on its foundation was built a replacement seven room addition incorporating paneling, hinges, doors, the corner cupboard and other architectural materials of the original 1723 saltbox. The next owners were the Sayers in 1970 and the current owners, the Bakers, have lived there since 1984. The Bakers have updated the 1935 portion of the house and done extensive landscaping.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to see a beautiful historic home in our midst and to benefit the restoration fund of the Filley House. Those of you who heard the WHS program on traprock houses will be especially pleased to see the details of a traprock house.

Eloise Marinos, restoration architect for the Filley House project, will be our guest to answer any questions you may have about that project.

We ask you to invite your friends to enjoy this afternoon with you.

For ticket information: 243-5195, 242-2953 or Lmas36@home.com

### Capt. Oliver Filley House Docent Committee Forming

It isn't too soon to begin researching and writing the Interpreters' Notebook for the Filley House docents! The Research and Development Committee for the Capt. Oliver Filley House Restoration, chaired by Sharon Steinberg, needs people who are interested in researching many historical issues relevant to the Filley House and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Bloomfield. Research takes time, is very exciting and rewarding, and is done both by a group and by individuals. You will have lots of help and guidance – but we need your curiosity and willingness to learn! A draft of the Filley House Docent Program will be available at the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting so you can decide what you want to work on. Contact Sharon Steinberg at the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, e-mail her at [cd000910@mindspring.com](mailto:cd000910@mindspring.com) or call her at 286-1066. She can also be reached at the Connecticut Historical Society where she is an Assistant Research Librarian at 236-5621.

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### Education Committee Needs Members

The Community Education Programs Committee, chaired by Judi Sitkin, is actively seeking members who are interested in becoming an active part of Bloomfield's education growth. This committee, formed as a liaison between the Wintonbury Historical Society and the Bloomfield Public Schools, will be working on artifact displays, cemetery tours, slide programs, and other exciting and educational projects. Contact Judi Sitkin, current chair, at [jsitkin@home.com](mailto:jsitkin@home.com) or 232-4602.

### Welcome New Members!

Col. and Mrs. Robert E. Gardner  
Allan R. Beebe

### Help Plan Filley Fest 2!

Those of us who attended our First Annual Filley Fest last year experienced a very special day: rides in a hotel wagon, demonstrations of spinning and broom-making, lots of new-to-us 19<sup>th</sup> century children's games, tours of the Capt. Oliver Filley House ongoing restoration, talks by our architect, Eloise Marinos, beautiful music, people in period costumes, and a wonderful feeling of community. Our Second Annual Filley Fest will take place on the first Saturday after Labor Day – September 4<sup>th</sup>.

We need volunteers to help organize this very special day: arranging for craftspeople, making decisions regarding the schedule and programs, working on publicity, exhibits, events – and meeting many new people! The first meeting will be on May 2. Contact Sharon Steinberg, Chair of the Second Annual Filley Fest, at 286-1066 or [cd000910@mindspring.com](mailto:cd000910@mindspring.com).

*The Wintonbury Drummer, the Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society of Bloomfield, welcomes all submissions of announcements, historical articles, photographs, events, articles, quotations, poetry, or ? You may e-mail Sharon Steinberg, Editor, at [cd000910@mindspring.com](mailto:cd000910@mindspring.com), or contact her at 286-1066, or mail it to her at 12 Regency Drive, #7, Bloomfield, CT 06002; you may also send your submission to Fannie Gabriel, 400 Seabury Drive, #5158, Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002.*

CALENDAR:

- April 4, 2001 -- Regular Meeting *Sacred Heart Church 7:30*  
June 3, 2001 -- Grant House and Gardens Tour  
June 6, 2001 -- WHS Annual Meeting, 6 p.m. - Pot Luck,  
Sacred Heart Church Community Room  
May 2, 2001 -- First meeting, Filley Fest 2  
Sept. 8, 2001 -- Second Annual Filley Fest

Wintonbury Historical Society  
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