

# The Wintonbury Drummer



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut — June 2014

## “ONE FAMILY’S CIVIL WAR” WITH CAROLYN IVANOFF FEATURED AT JUNE 11 ANNUAL MEETING

The Society’s Annual Meeting and potluck supper will be held on June 11, 2014, starting at 6:00 in Father Picher Hall at Sacred Heart Church, 26 Wintonbury Avenue. Bring a dish to share with others. The program will begin about 7:30 and feature Carolyn Ivanoff with an illustrated Civil War program. The following is her description:

This is a story about a family and the words that have traveled through generations from the Civil War years to us today in the form of letters. These are the letters of a family that lived those years of struggle and sacrifice. The story from the beginning is a tribute to the family members who wrote and preserved those letters, who cared enough for the letters that they read them and transcribed them into a collection that could be read by succeeding generations. The beginning of this story is told in an introduction written by Mrs. Elizabeth Lake Richardson and her husband Donald so their family would know and understand the world of their grandparents and great grandparents who had lived through those terrible Civil War years. So in telling you this wonderful family history I will use many of those lovingly crafted words from their introduction of the transcription of the letters. By means of those letters we can travel through the generations to honor those men and women. Highly important family news was shared and conveyed, along with the great issues of the time. This year we are in the midst of the 150<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Civil War,

**What:** Wintonbury Historical Society Annual Meeting , potluck supper and program

**When:** Wednesday, June 11, 2014, 6:00 PM until about 8:30

**Where:** Sacred Heart Church’s Father Picher Hall, 26 Wintonbury Ave.

**Bring:** a hot or cold dish to share

**Speaker:** Carolyn Ivanoff of Shelton, well-known educator and history speaker (who last spoke in June 2012 at Wintonbury).

Continued on page 2 —>

**In this issue:** Society Receives Grant from CT Humanities, page 3; Curator’s Corner, page 3; Filley House Getting Attention, pages 4-5; Tag Sale photos, page 6; CT Open House Day, page 7; Gardeners Needed, page 7; and Wintonbury Wildlife, page 8.

## SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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the epic test and struggle to preserve the Union, to end the terrible tragedy of slavery in this nation forever. These years became an American Iliad, and much has passed down into myth: great deeds, great men. But at the heart of a nation torn in two, were people like us. Individuals and families who lived, and fought, worried and prayed for their loved ones, that they would survive, that the nation would survive. These men and women sacrificed so much. They were people and families like all of us caught in a world and events that they could not control, but who played their individual roles, and lived their lives, and lost their lives, in the midst of a nation at war. This is a story of many layers, a family story, a love story, a story of our state and nation, a war story and a story of hope, sacrifice, survival, and life.



Carolyn Ivanoff

### NOTES FROM MY READING submitted by R. Pierce

Nikki Mandell and Bobbie Malone. *Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction*. Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2007.

**Most fundamentally, history is not the past. It is a study of the past.** [...] The teacher or student must take on the persona of the “talkative detective.” *Why a detective?* History is not a compilation of indisputable facts or statements. History is built on the reasoned evaluation and synthesis of historical evidence. The historical detective searches for, compiles, and sifts through evidence about the past. [...] *Why talkative?* [...] In order to find the right sources, we must enter into a “dialogue” with the sources by asking many questions of each source we encounter. (pp. 3-4)



**Building an interpretation based on evidence is the defining characteristic of history.** Interpretation is the culmination of the work of the talkative detective. Unlike criminal detectives, however, historical detectives do not expect “open and shut” cases or to “wrap up all the loose ends.” In some cases, where sources are limited, historical interpretation must be tentative. In some cases, finding answers to one set of questions opens the door to a new set of questions. Successful historical investigations can conclude with questions as well as answers. (p. 6)

The key to good history, and the factor that distinguishes historical interpretation from bias or opinion, is the absolute requirement that historical conclusions must be supportable by the historical record AND take into consideration sometimes conflicting perspectives and experience in that record. (p. 7)

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Wintonbury Historical Society, Inc.

151-153 School Street, P.O. Box 7454, Bloomfield, CT 06002

Tel. 860-243-1531

Email: [Wintonbursociety@att.net](mailto:Wintonbursociety@att.net)

Web: [www.bloomfieldcthistory.org](http://www.bloomfieldcthistory.org)

**Connecticut**  
still revolutionary

# SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT TO IMPROVE WEBSITE

The Wintonbury Historical Society has received a grant of \$2,030 from Connecticut Humanities to improve and update its website, [www.bloomfieldcthistory.org](http://www.bloomfieldcthistory.org). The goal is to enhance the Society as a service organization. The improved website will allow the Society to serve a wider geographic audience. It will also be more attractive to those who are accustomed to accessing the Internet for information, event calendars, and purchases.

The improved website will fit in with the Society's mission, which is, in part, to preserve and make accessible historical information about the diverse people, places, institutions and events of Bloomfield. The website will make available a number of online resources for Bloomfield history and genealogy. Visitors will be able purchase books and other merchandise and view an up-to-date calendar of Society and town events.

This grant is a result of the Society's participation in the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs) sponsored by Connecticut Humanities and the Connecticut League of History Organizations. Created by the American Association for State and Local History, the two-year program involved intensive self-study, attendance at workshops, and consultation with museum professionals. Wintonbury was one of twenty-five Connecticut history organizations to participate in this new program and has been awarded certificates for meeting museum standards in Collections, Audience, Interpretation, Historic Structures, Management and Governance.

The improved website will be designed by Daniel Uitti, Bloomfield native and web professional now living in Watertown and owner of Dasum Company. The coordinator for the Society is Dennis Hubbs of Bloomfield. Committee members include Greg Babal, Tom Daly, Quinton Johnson, Dick Pierce, and Ralph Schmoll. Judy Dahlgren-Dechand will serve as Fiscal Agent. Work on the website has already begun and should be completed by this fall.



## CURATOR'S CORNER by Fannie Gabriel

You may remember that the Barton bells (for which East Hampton is famous) were first made in Wintonbury. A recent inquiry asked for more background on that little-known fact.

Lemuel Haynes, who studied for the ministry around 1780 under Wintonbury Parish's Hezekiah Bissell, went on to a productive career as a Congregationalist pastor. In doing some further research I found that he lived for a time in Granville, NY, which is on the Vermont border. This information was provided by former WHS president Lee Comar, who lives in Granville. The Lemuel Haynes homestead in Granville, which is in private hands, is still in good condition.



Haynes Home, Granville NY

[Note: Haynes lived in two Granvilles. As a child he grew up in Granville, Massachusetts. After his studies in Bloomfield and subsequent ordination in 1785, he pastored in Torrington CT for two years, Rutland VT for thirty years, Manchester VT for three years, and South Granville NY for the final eleven years of his life, dying there at age eighty.]

# FILLEY HOUSE GETTING SOME ATTENTION AT LAST

*The 1834 Filley House was stabilized and weather-proofed four or five years ago, partly as a result of a grant secured by the Wintonbury Historical Society. It is located within the town-owned LaSalette Park on Mountain Avenue.*



South view of Workshop Barn (post-1865)

*Last winter, John Lawlor, Director of Public Works, noticed that the outbuildings around the Filley House were in poor shape and in danger of collapsing. When he heard of this, Philip Schenck, town manager, called a meeting to seek information and explore possibilities. On January 22 Schenck and Lawlor met with Thom Hooper (Planning and Zoning), Ben Whittaker (Facilities Director), Dave Malesko (Leisure Services), and Fred Hesketh and Dick Pierce of the Historical Society. About the same time, Society directors Ron and Ruthanne Marchetti visited the Filley property and became curious about the outbuildings. Using his experience, Ron was able to provide some valuable historical critique, and when the group met again in March, he was there along with Vicki Reski of the Wintonbury Land Trust (which has used LaSalette Park for hikes and other events). By this time Fannie Gabriel, having heard about the meetings, dug into Society files and came up with a scholarly paper written in 2001 about the Filley outbuildings by Robin Cloud, an architecture student at Columbia University. A body of information was being assembled. Reski arranged for a visit by Greg Farmer of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. Farmer, an expert in evaluating historic structures, concluded that the outbuildings were a valuable part of the historic landscape. The following report by Ron Marchetti, will sum up the current status of the conversation.*



Old Hay Barn (probably before 1865)



Corncrib (an agricultural gem")

The tour of the Filley property barns with Gregory Farmer, "Connecticut Circuit Rider," (and wouldn't I love a title like that), proved to be instructive. The hay barn, the workshop barn, and the corn crib all presented sufficient historical interest to generate enthusiasm to preserve them.

Foremost should be a commitment to physically stabilize the structures. Mr. Farmer suggested that this would not require a great deal of money to do, and suggested two paths to attain a "Technical Assistance Grant" to study and document the historic and cultural significance of the structures.

Information is available at the site of Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. This grant, he suggested, should best



Wellhouse (probably mid-1800s)

Continued on next page —>

be proposed by the town and supported by the Historical Society and the Wintonbury Land Trust. Grants of this nature are all matching at 50%, and often require that the trustee(s) fund the entire project up front, with the matching funds disbursed after the completion of the project. Thus the town, both as owner of the property and possessor of more resources than the non-profits, would be the appropriate applicant for the grant.

The second suggestion was to apply directly to the State Historic Preservation Office for a research grant. There is a possibility that the state could be successfully petitioned to waive the match in this case.

In order to conduct significant research, both barns need immediate stabilization because of safety concerns. This would come under the responsibility of the Town DPW and its cost should be relatively minor.

The hay barn appeared to be contemporary, or close to it, with the main house, and hence its intrinsic value. The work of stabilization of the hay barn should be undertaken as quickly as possible because one wall is in a state of collapse, despite relatively sound framing in the roof. Once the building is safe, the harder work of deciding what to do with it will drive the process of historic preservation. For example, will the barn be useful as an interpretive site, or for hosting a CSA program? Can it generate income? Answers to questions like these will take time to determine, but if the building is externally sound, time will be much less of an issue.

The workshop barn was thought to be a much later structure, post-civil war but still 19th century. In it there remain pieces of belt-driven antique equipment suspended from the rafters; the building's historic significance probably derives more from this use than its age or architectural style. The metal-work enterprise of the Filley family can help inform the original use of the building.

All-in-all, those of us who have viewed the outbuildings are pretty enthusiastic about the possibilities at the site. And, as Ben Whittaker said, if we're going to improve the outbuildings, we certainly should complete the restoration of the house at the same time. Whether the town can come up with matching money, assuming we can get a grant, seems to be the biggest obstacle to face for the present.

[All photos by R. Pierce, May 2014]



Workshop Barn door (post 1900 addition)



Part of pulley structure, post-1900 barn



East End, pre-1865 Hay Barn



East Side, post 1865 Workshop Barn



**New Members:**

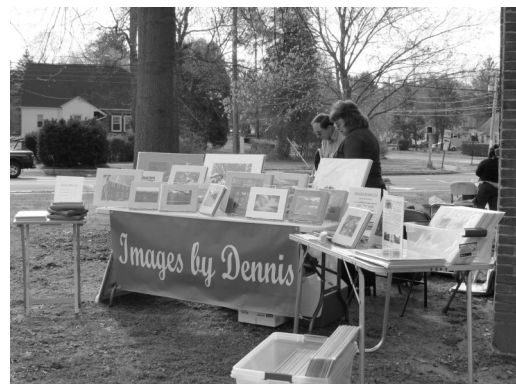
Jonathan Stone, 12 Overbrook Road  
 Alice Kugelman, 80 Loeffler Road

**In Memoriam:**

It is with sadness that we report the passing of historian and genealogist Roberta Kania. She was the Society in so many ways. In 1991, after the town had purchased the LaSalette property, she pledged the support of WHS to restore the stone Filley House. At that time the cost was too much for the Society to undertake, but recent events have shown that her vision is still alive. (See separate article on pages 4-5.)

**TAG SALE PHOTOS**

BY JANIS LANGSTON

**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

**THANK YOU!**





we ♥ A  
volunteers!

## GARDENERS NEEDED

The flower gardens at the Old Farm School are being cleaned up and replanted as necessary with period flowers through the efforts of members of the Church of Jesus Christ, Latter Day Saints (Mountain Road, Bloomfield), WHS Director and Bloomfield teacher Dr. Selena Brooks, and Kevin Wilcox, owner of Silver Spring Nursery 696 Cottage Grove Road at Bloom Hill Farm.

While people in 1796 didn't keep immaculate flower gardens, we do need help in weeding and caring for these beds. When you have a few minutes, stop by and lend a hand. So that we may keep records of volunteer hours, please let us know your time by leaving a message at 860-243-1531 or emailing [wintonbursociety@att.net](mailto:wintonbursociety@att.net). Would you be part of an informal garden committee?



On Connecticut Open House Day, Saturday, June 14, 2014, the Old Farm School and the History Center will be open from 11:00 to 3:00. Please stop by and visit awhile!



Flossie Havens and Fannie Gabriel at Prosser Library's  
Volunteer Fair, May 5, 2014

R. Pierce photo

## LEAVING A LEGACY

The Wintonbury Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dependent on the generosity of people who value history and Bloomfield history in particular. Its mission is to identify, collect, organize, preserve and make accessible historical information about the diverse people, places, institutions and events of Bloomfield, Connecticut.

A larger endowment would put the Society upon a firmer financial foundation. To this end the Society solicits contributions from individuals and businesses. You can make a difference by (1) setting aside a gift in your will to the Society, (2) naming the Society as beneficiary of an insurance policy, (3) remembering loved ones with gifts to the Society in their honor, (4) naming the Society as beneficiary of an IRA or 401K, and making an outright gift today. Thank you.

## WINTONBURY WILDLIFE, PART 2

In the previous issue of the *Drummer* (April 2014), we published a list of birds seen in 2007 at the Wintonbury Hills Golf Course. Sam Fried, who compiled the list, is a former resident of Mountain Road in Bloomfield. Here we publish the list of other species that Sam observed.



Shannon McMahon photo

### MAMMALS

Striped Skunk  
Red Fox  
Coyote  
White-Tailed Deer  
Bobcat  
Raccoon  
Muskrat  
Eastern Grey Squirrel  
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit  
Eastern Chipmunk  
Meadow Vole  
Opossum  
Northern River Otter  
Black Bear  
Short-Tailed Shrew  
Masked Shrew  
Starnose Mole

### BUTTERFLIES

Orange Sulphur  
Clouded Sulphur  
Cabbage White  
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail  
Black Swallowtail  
Eastern Comma  
Tawny-Edged Skipper  
Peck's Skipper

Least Skipper  
Pearl Crescent  
Common Ringlet  
Northern Broken-Dash  
Viceroy  
Great Spangled Fritillary  
Appalachian Brown  
Eastern Tailed-Blue  
Common Wood-Nymph

### DRAGONFLIES

Eastern Amberwing  
Cherry-Faced Meadowhawk  
Common Whitetail  
Widow Skimmer  
Twelve-Spotted Skimmer  
Blue Dasher  
Green-Striped Darner  
Eastern Pondhawk  
Halloween Pennant

### DAMSELFLIES

Eastern Forktail  
Fragile Forktail  
Skimming Bluet  
Orange Bluet  
Elegant Spreadwing  
Common Spreadwing

### AMPHIBIANS

Wood Frog  
Gray Tree Frog  
Bull Frog  
Green Frog



R. Pierce photo