



The Wintonbury Drummer

Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

November 2021

NOVEMBER 2nd PROGRAM: APPLES AND HISTORY

Amy Traverso will talk about her *Apple Lover's Cookbook* via Zoom at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. Her book describes 70 varieties of apples, including apples important to early settlers in Wintonbury.

Amy Traverso is the senior food editor at *Yankee* magazine and co-host of the national public television series, *Weekends with Yankee*. She is also the food and dining contributor to WGBH Radio's *Under the Radar with Callie Crossley*. Previously, Amy was food editor at *Boston Magazine* and associate food editor at *Sunset* magazine.

With her first book, *The Apple Lover's Cookbook*, Amy was a finalist for the Julia Child First Book Award from the International Association of Culinary Professionals, and she won an IACP Award for Best American Cookbook. She has appeared on such television programs as the Hallmark Channel's *Home & Family*, *Throwdown with Bobby Flay*, Gordon Ramsay's *Kitchen Nightmares* and *The Martha Stewart Show*.

Amy grew up in Windsor picking apples and eating apple crisp. She has lived in California, New Mexico, and around New England, and wherever she has gone, she has been a student of the local apple culture. She lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

► This is a ZOOM Program. To attend, please register ahead of time at the Bloomfield Public Library website. Go to <https://bplct.org>, click on Event Calendar, and complete the registration. The library will send the necessary link to your email inbox.



Amy Traverso
Website photo

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ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Seventeen people, including ten officers and directors, connected via Zoom on September 22, 2021, 3:00 PM, for the annual meeting of the Wintonbury Historical Society. The minutes of the September 9, 2020, meeting were approved, and the treasurer's report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, was also approved. The treasurer reported income for the fiscal year of \$10,048 and expenses of \$13,614.

Doug Barnard said that we have 100 gallons of fuel oil at the Old Farm School. He recommended joining the Citizen's Oil Co-op (Deitch Energy), which offers oil at a lower cost. Membership costs \$25 a year, but savings could amount to 40 to 50 cents per gallon. A motion was made and affirmatively voted to join the co-op. We need to fill the tank this fall and will also have to secure a service contract. Bill Weissenburger was at the Old Farm School recently while Barrett Builders of Tariffville replaced the caulking around the eight posts that hold up the belfry. It is hoped that this will solve the school's roof leak. Bill said we will be working on the Old Farm School renovation piece by piece and will not at this time try to raise the \$80,000 needed to do the whole job.

Diana Barnard reported receiving donations from four people during 2020-2021, including a spinning wheel, a Bloomfield Girl Scout uniform, Bloomfield High School yearbooks, and a painting of an A. C. Petersen farm.

Marilyn Johnston was reelected as secretary, and the Directors Class of 2021 was reelected as the Class of 2024.



Photo by Bill Weissenburger

OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

Many Rivers Community Acupuncture, 3 Barnard Lane
Printmark Services, 21 Old Windsor Road
Wade's Farms, 498 Simsbury Road

ATTENTION!

The Wintonbury Drummer invites readers to contribute articles, personal reminiscences, book reviews, photographs, etc. Materials for publication in the February issue should be received by January 1, 2022.

The Wintonbury Drummer

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FREDERICK A. HESKETH

Frederick Hesketh, long-time supporter and practitioner of Bloomfield history, passed away on September 27. He leaves his wife Yolande and five children, Todd, Guy, Cynthia (Calitri), Scott, and Joy (Tierney), and his grandchildren. During his long life, Fred was an exemplar of civic engagement and family values.

Fred grew up in Cranston, Rhode Island, where he played baseball and marched in a Fife and Drum Corps. He served in the United States Army. He held degrees from the University of Rhode Island and from Yale University. He was the owner of the civil engineering firm F. A. Hesketh and Associates, and his impact as an engineer can be seen all over New England in hundreds of building, roadway, and site improvements. Fred was an active member of Sacred Heart Church in Bloomfield and author of *The History of the Catholic Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut* (2003). He also wrote *Bloomfield and the Civil War* in 2009. A longtime member of the Wintonbury Historical Society, Fred also served as Bloomfield's official Town Historian. His writing frequently appeared in *The Bloomfield Journal* and *The Bloomfield Messenger*. He volunteered many hours to organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. His intellect, his energy, and his positive outlook uplifted the town of Bloomfield. His many contributions to the community will long be remembered.



Fred Hesketh
WHS Archives photo

Note: Fred's books are still available for sale at the Gabriel History Center, 153 School Street (or order online at bloomfieldchistory.org).



ARTFUL GARDENS TOUR ENJOYED BY ALL

Sunday, September 19, turned out to be a delightful fall day, and the Artful Garden Tour was a huge success, with 179 tickets sold. Sales included 53 by the PayPal link on the WHS website and 95 sold at Wade's Farm stand. With revenue from sponsors, gross receipts totaled over \$8,000. The Old Farm School hosted 85 visitors in three hours. Thanks to Michael Riley for placing one of his cows on the WHS lawn without charge and to the many volunteers who made things run smoothly. The final financial report will be forthcoming.



L-R: Wendy Wolcott, Ruthanne Marchetti,
Diana Barnard, and Libbie Merrow
with Michael Riley's cow
(Bill Weissenburger photo)

AMERICAN LEGION: Harry E. Johnson Post #116 and Unit

A Brief History of the First Quarter-Century.

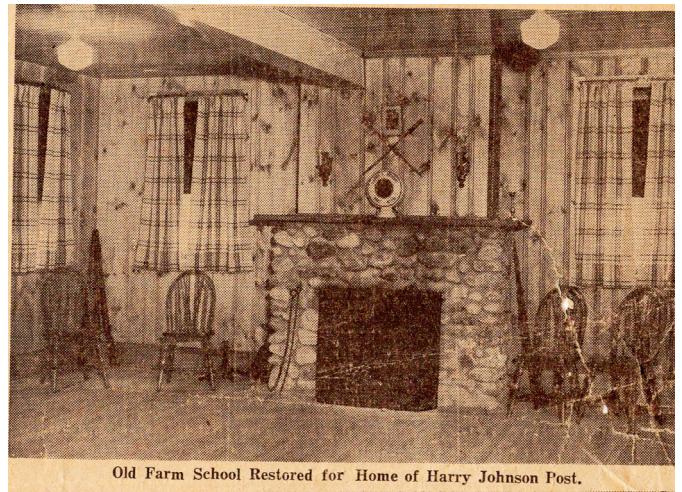
Published September 21, 1953, author unknown

On September 21, 1928, a group of fifteen Bloomfield veterans of World War I, together with twenty-seven mothers, wives and sisters of veterans, organized a Legion Post and Unit in the town. Here was born one of the thousands of American Legion local groups which, jointly and severally, have been dedicated to the nation's welfare and have been foremost in advancing the principles of justice, freedom and democracy.

In accord with the then prevalent custom of naming a Legion post after the veteran who became the first local casualty of the war, this new post was chartered as the Harry E. Johnson Post #116, and National Headquarters issued official charters for both Post and Unit in early January of 1929. The first Post Commander to be elected was Raymond Barnard; the first Unit President was Hilda Johnson, sister of Harry Johnson.

Harry Johnson, the man thus honored by his fellow veterans, was born in New York State in 1895 and came to Bloomfield as a young boy, where he attended the Bloomfield Grammar School and West Hartford High School. On June 23, 1916, he enlisted at Hartford in Company B, 102nd Infantry. He served on the Mexican border from June to October in 1916. Before sailing for France in September 1917, he was promoted to Corporal; and, at a later unknown date, he became a Sergeant in France. He suffered shrapnel wounds on April 10, 1918, later returned to duty, and was killed in action on July 23, 1918, just about one week before he was scheduled to leave the lines for officers' school. His body was returned to this country on July 21, 1921, and he is buried in Mountain View Cemetery. In this same cemetery, high on the hill, his Post later established a Soldiers' Field, where veterans may rest together after the final call.

In the matter of finding a home, our Post was fortunate in securing use of the Old Farm School. Co-operative town officials, recognizing the humanitarian principles of the American Legion, leased this historic building to the Post for as long as the Legion survives. It is a building rich in town tradition, and there are many residents still in Bloomfield who can tell us the days they spent as children attending school there. Upstairs can be seen the original benches and desks at which they absorbed a childhood education.



Old Farm School Restored for Home of Harry Johnson Post.

The Old Farm School was built in 1796; its design has been credited (in the belief of many people) to Charles Bullfinch, the famous colonial architect who designed the old State House in Hartford. The Bell in the steeple, reputed to be the first bell hung in the town, was donated by Frederick Bull (who lived over Blue Hills way) and cast by (continued—>)

William Barton, an early craftsman of old Wintonbury, who is credited with being the first bell maker hereabouts to cast bells in one piece.

The original lease of these premises was signed on March 3, 1931 by Selectmen Frank D. Hall, John Milvae, and Harold L. Woodford. Harold is one of the charter members of the Post. William Breining, then Post Commander, signed for the Legion. In 1936, during the reign of Commander George Smith and President Wilhelmina Finley, the building was extensively renovated. A fireplace was built by E. Newton Peck from field stone gathered by Oscar Tyler. The old floor was insulated, and a new floor of polished wood laid. Pine panels decorated the walls, outside brickwork was repaired and pointed, and the old school was glistening with new paint inside and out on December 6, when the Post held open house to show the building to visitors. At the time these renovations were accomplished, the Post had 45 members, the Unit 49.



Post and Unit lost no time in becoming an important factor in town life and affairs. A scant few years after its organization, and before the town had a regularly established welfare department, a deep and lasting depression hit this country, throwing countless men out of work, creating a welfare problem which was to become a national blight. For more than five years, the Post and Unit took over the task of coordinating services to provide material comfort for the poor and destitute, of which our town had its share, as did every town and city. Of this depressing period, it can be said that the post and Unit never faltered in the work, expense, and personal sacrifice of members necessary to feed, clothe and find work for any who needed it.

Our present High School, dedicated on September 2, 1930, was furnished with the first flag for the outside pole by the Legion. One of our members, Llewellyn A. Tobie, was chairman of the building committee for this school. Two of the three members of the Board of Education, or School Committee, of that period, LeRoy Watkins and Louise Loveland, were Legion members.

Rehabilitation and child welfare form an important, country-wide part of the Legion service. In both these phases of work, our Post and unit has been outstanding. Proof of this is the number of citations issued to our local organization from National Headquarters and the personal citations received by members from the same source. Locally, the Post and Unit have sponsored and conducted such youth activities as the Santa Workshop, Easter Egg Hunts, Tide of Toys in '49, Connecticut Boys State and Connecticut Girls State (to which we yearly send boys and girls from Bloomfield). Scout Troop 55 was, for years, sponsored by the Post. Essay contests in the schools, oratorical contests, Junior League Baseball, bicycle registrations in cooperation with the Police Department: all these youth activities and services are part of our Legion program here in Bloomfield.

For many years, the Post's annual musical show was a popular feature of the town's social life. After their discontinuance during the World War II years, they have now been resumed, and our hope is that they will achieve again the high standards of (continued—>)

earlier years. An interesting note about the first musical show in 1930 comes out of a Unit report that the show was an artistic success and, incidentally, “realized a profit of \$220.00.”

The local Legion helped to observe the tricentennial of Bloomfield in 1935 [sic] and participated in the several days of ceremony incidental to this celebration. As a part of this, on September 20 of that year, Commander Horace Tuttle, assisted by Colonel Anson T. McCook of Hartford, dedicated the World War I memorial erected on Roberts Green.

Memorial Day observances have been the responsibility of the Legion since its first year of operation. We organize a memorial parade, furnish music and a speaker, decorate the graves of all deceased veterans, and try in every way to make the program a reverent, dignified observance such as this important day demands.

Memorial Day of 1949 was a special occasion for the Post and for the town. The Legion had been working for several months to secure a plot of ground to be set aside as a Soldiers Field for the burial of deceased veterans. With the cooperation of the trustees of the Mountain View Cemetery, a plot on the highest point of this venerable burial ground was reserved as a Soldiers Field. There a tall flagpole was erected by the Post, and on this May 30, 1949, the National Colors were raised and the field was dedicated.



World War II intensified the work of the Legion here, as everywhere. Its members worked as air raid wardens, airplane observers, disaster teams, and bond sellers. The chief of the airplane spotter service and the chairman of the Town Defense Council were then current officers of the Post. The Town’s control center drew heavily on the Legion for its personnel. Members helped the Rationing Board in its heavy schedule of work.

Courtesy cards for Legion Post privileges were sent to every town boy and girl in the service, wherever they might be stationed. The World War II bulletin, erected on Roberts Green and listing all townspeople in the service, was cosponsored by the Lions Club and the Legion. *The Messenger*, a unique and splendid example of friendly journalism in the form of a monthly paper, which went to all Bloomfield folks in the service, was another of the World War II services in which individual members of the Legion helped.

The following paragraphs were added by Ellen S. Breining in September 1958:

In the five years that have elapsed since the history was written for the first quarter century and read at the 25th anniversary of the Harry E. Johnson Post and Unit in 1953, both organizations have continued to carry on the fine work of the Legion.

In 1956, the Post again resumed sponsorship of a boy scout troop, men of the post acting as scout leaders and committeemen. American flags have been presented to local schools. The Post gave flags for the flagpole at the new High School and for the Wintonbury School, and also for the classrooms at the Beth Hillel Synagogue. (continued—>)

Under the Americanism program, members of the post sold American flags to the townspeople, earning money for the post treasury while encouraging people to display the flag of our country on patriotic holidays. The Memorial and Armistice Day (now known as Veteran's Day) programs have been carried on as in the past.

The Post and Unit continue to send two boys and two girls to Laurel Boys' and Girls' State each year. Citizenship awards were presented to outstanding students in our local schools. The Poppy Sale has been carried on by the Auxiliary annually for the past thirty years. This money is used in the work at the Veterans' Hospitals and to aid needy veterans and their families. The Post has grown to a membership of 120 members to date. The Auxiliary, while small in numbers, continues to carry on the ideals and principles for which it was organized.

**Notes from the 1938-1939 Annual Report
of the Auxiliary
written by Edna A. Woodford, historian**

The hurricane started us off with a bang, causing postponement of our annual joint installation and anniversary party and setting the boys at work at active community projects. Lanterns, boots, raincoats, axes, saws and shovels were regulation equipment. For days we were hurricane conscious, and the Legion and its Auxiliary kept busy.

Financially we are poor—a small unit of poor folks. On October 18, we reported a red ink figure on the ledger of about \$10.00. The January meeting reported 53 paid-up members.

The Unit has undertaken the sponsorship of a 4-H Girls Club group. A Mrs. Pierpont acts as leader. They use the Old Farm School Building, Legion room, two Wednesday afternoons a month, immediately preceding our meetings.

Harry E. Johnson Post, American Legion

<u>Year</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>President</u>
1928	Raymond Barnard	Hilda Johnson
1929	Anthony Zack	Ellen Breining
1930	William Breining	Hazel Cawte
1931	Harold Woodford	Jennie Burke
1932	Fred Pinney	Pearl Tuttle
1933	Martin Dexheimer	Mildred Guilmartin
1934	Horace Tuttle	Mae Pinney
1935	Clifford Butler	Gertrude Woodford
1936	George Smith	Wilhelmina Finley
1937	Ralph Finley	Wilhelmina Finley
1938	Oscar Tyler	Mary Austin
1939	E. Newton Peck	Dorcas Janet
1940	Fred Biederman	Agnes Hubbard
1941	Andre Janet	Mary D'Addeo
1942	Joseph D'Addeo	Louise Loveland
1943	Herbert Stiles	Mary Austin
1944	William Perkins	Edna Woodford
1945	Daniel Walsh	Grace Biederman
1946	Arthur Joyce	Cora Wooster
1947	Raymond Barnard	Edith Keeney
1948	Domenick Demeo	Edith Keeney
1949	Thomas Wall	Gertrude Woodford
1950	Nicholas Riccio	Gertrude Woodford
1951	Richard Rettig	Agnes Hubbard
1952	John Tinto	Agnes Hubbard
1953	Wayne John	Agnes Hubbard
1954	Herbert Stiles, Jr.	Agnes Hubbard
1955	Joseph Beninato	Agnes Hubbard
1956	Joseph Mandell	Patricia Rettig
1957	John Bredice	Pearl Tuttle
1958	Asterio Segerra	Pearl Tuttle
1959	Joseph Miller	Dorothy Dellert

The Veterans Hospital has not been forgotten. The World War orphans seem to have fared pretty well. We are proud of our welfare work. The Red Cross and Salvation Army—both these agencies have been contributed to according to our ability. Comrades, Unit members and friends contributed of time, money, toys, paint, brushes, etc., on our Christmas reconditioning of toys. Eight hundred poppies were ordered; we sold 730 and raised \$88.39.

Egg hunts, card parties, suppers, and other varied activities—usual and unusual—came and went. We came to the help [of the men] and paid for their playing cards. The Armistice Night Supper—an affair for Post and Auxiliary—was well attended and enjoyed by all.

IN MEMORIAM

Beverly Wood died October 11, 2021. A resident of Seabury, she brought a knowledge of textile preservation from her volunteer experience at the Stowe (VT) Historical Society and



Photo courtesy of Seabury

spent many hours applying it at the Wintonbury Historical Society. She will be missed.

A graduate of Smith College, Beverly was a homemaker, parent, and volunteer. She had lived in Vermont before retiring to Seabury.

we  volunteers!

THANK YOU, DOCENTS!

The following WHS members served as docents at the Old Farm School and/or the Gabriel History Center during the 2021 season. Thanks to them, the buildings were open Sunday afternoons from May 16 through October 10.

Baram, David and Paula
 Barnard, Doug and Diana
 Cappadona, John
 Dahlgren-Dechand, Judy
 Guilmartin, Homer
 Hubbs, Dennis and Donna
 Johnston, Marilyn
 Katz, Tobie
 Laiuppa, Mary
 Langston, Janis
 Merrow, Libbie
 Pierce, Dick and Jean
 Roones, David and Patty
 Schmoll, Ralph and Louise
 Weissenburger, Bill
 Whitman, Mara, and Marc Edrich

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS?

LAST BUSINESS IN OLD SHOPPING CENTER CLOSES

Reprinted from *The Hartford Courant*, May 21, 1970 (Editor's note: This is a transcription of a paper clipping in WHS files. The date is handwritten, difficult to decipher, and so may be inaccurate.)

The lights in the Park Avenue Shopping Center went out for the final time Saturday as the last of the ten businesses in the center closed.

The center was built in 1947 and will soon be demolished to make room for parking spaces in Wintonbury Mall, the major part of Bloomfield's redevelopment project.

Several occupants of the center moved to the new Wintonbury Mall Shopping Center located directly behind the old shopping area. Others moved out of town or closed their doors altogether. Two occupants of the old center are building new stores in Bloomfield.

Harold Noble's Hardware store was the oldest business in the shopping center, and rather than move into the mall he closed the store. Noble says he realizes redevelopment is for the good of the town, but he could not afford the rents he would have to pay to move into the new shopping center.

Cumberland Farms is closing its store until a location can be found to build a new building.

Another businessman, Lawrence Cohen, owner of the Park Pharmacy is happy with his new store in the mall. He said that while his rent doubled the increase in business will offset the cost. His customers seem to like the new location, and he has had to increase his work force since the move, less than a month ago, he said.

The Park Avenue Department Store, one of those who refused to make the move, has relocated to the Pine Plaza Shopping Center, Forestville. The Sports Centre, a wholesale sporting good outlet, has moved to Windsor. A beauty parlor and shoe shop relocated to other shopping centers in town.