

# HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2015

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## Harwinton Historical Society Wins \$1,000 Award for Programs

The Harwinton Historical Society has received notice that the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut has awarded the society a \$1,000 grant which will be used for providing history-related programs to the public and HHS membership. This grant is made possible by the Miriam Mason Cable Trust Fund of the Foundation. The award will be combined with program budgeted funds to enhance the society's lecture series throughout the 2015-2016 year.

The society is grateful to the Foundation for helping us offer a variety of programs that are often staffed by professional lecturers.

Two such programs have been scheduled on subject of the Colonial Period on September 27, and October 11, 2015 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Harwinton Library.

Additional programs will be advertised throughout the fall and winter through the Society's newsletter and the local news media.

A bus trip to the Freedom Trail in Boston is being considered if there is enough interest.

## Repairs Made to Barn Museum Siding and Outhouse



Charles Kirchofer, left, who originally built the barn museum in 1977, was busy this summer replacing the boards on the South side of the barn. Over time, the boards had rotted in several places. Charlie also made repairs to the outhouse siding and roof. Building maintenance supervisor Dennis Andrews will re-stain the siding before winter.

Many thanks to Charlie for utilizing his skills and talent to make the necessary repairs and to Dennis for continuing to monitor the historical society buildings.

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### A BIT OF TRIVIA

**A bit of trivia for July:** In 1965, what was the proposal that a large turnout of Harwinton voters defeated? **Answer:** By a vote of 352-179 voters defeated a proposal to start Harwinton's first public kindergarten.

**August Trivia Question:** What is a "kitchen junket"?

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## August 19<sup>th</sup> Marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of '55 Flood

Sixty years ago this month, newspaper accounts of the August 19, 1955 flood that devastated the Naugatuck River Valley towns including Harwinton called the event "The Worst Flood Since Noah." Sudden torrential rains following back-to-back hurricanes Connie and Diane permanently damaged much of Connecticut including the western section of Harwinton that borders the Naugatuck River.

As a result of the flooding about 90 people died and property damage across the state was estimated at more than \$200 million, in 1955 figures. The floods prompted changes in safety measures, river monitoring and zoning laws.

Following the devastation, the building of a flood control dam in Thomaston displaced farms and homes along the banks of the river, changing the landscape and people's lives forever. The memory of that fateful day has remained and the story has been retold each August for the past 60 years.

July 21, 2015

## **Grave Markers Honor Harwinton Revolutionary War Veteran 181 Years After His Death**

Ross Township, Michigan – On Saturday, July 11th at 1:00 p.m. a crowd of approximately 115 gathered at Yorkville Cemetery in Ross Township to dedicate the new grave markers placed on Daniel S. Wilson's grave. These markers identify him as a Revolutionary War Veteran.

“It is important to honor all military veterans who have served this nation. When a forgotten patriot’s grave is located, no matter how long it has taken, their lives need to be commemorated. There are now a total of eight known Revolutionary War Veterans buried in Kalamazoo County. Wilson was a forgotten veteran buried in Kalamazoo County, until he was brought to the attention of the Lucinda Hinsdale Stone Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution by William Brackett from Niles, Michigan,” said Kathy Noble, who coordinated the ceremony. Brackett was researching his own Wilson branch of ancestors and “stumbled on Daniel S. Wilson.” He realized that Wilson’s grave was never marked as a Revolutionary War soldier. Upon further research it was discovered that the national DAR ancestor data base and other genealogy data bases listed Wilson’s death and interment as being in Connecticut. This information has since been corrected in the DAR data base.

Wilson was born on Jan. 2, 1757 and lived in Harwinton, Connecticut until he traveled to Michigan to visit his daughter, Ursula Barnes. During that visit he died on May 25, 1834. Ursula was the second wife of Tillotson Barnes, founder of Yorkville in 1832. Mr. Barnes allocated a tract of his land on the southwest side of Gull Lake as his father-in-law’s final resting place. This was the first death in the township; the cemetery is believed to be one of the oldest in the county.

Military honors were carried out by the Fort Custer National Cemetery Honor Guard Wednesday Squad from the American Legion Post 298 in Battle Creek. State Senator Margaret O’Brien honored this veteran on behalf of a grateful government by laying a wreath at the grave. A new grave marker and two rod markers identifying Wilson as a Revolutionary War Soldier were placed. The Lucinda Hinsdale Stone Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, including Gloria Culp, Chapter Regent and bagpiper for the ceremony; the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Michigan; the Michigan Society Sons of the American Revolution, including the West Michigan Chapter Sons of the American Revolution from Grand Rapids; and the Michigan Society Children of the American Revolution, including the Ki-Ka-Ma-Sung Society Children of the American Revolution in Kalamazoo, participated in the ceremony.

Excerpts were read from Wilson’s testimony in the Litchfield, Connecticut Probate court that was used to obtain a military pension. This testimony is included in his pension file. A letter was read from Wilson’s son Warren to his sister Ursula that expressed his sorrow and conveyed consolatory thoughts to her. This letter was written in Oct. 1834 and had been in the Barnes family’s possession. (Continued on page 4)

## Harwinton native Daniel S. Wilson honored (continued from page 3)



**This plaque in Michigan marks the final resting place of Harwinton native and Revolutionary War Veteran Daniel S. Wilson.**

Wilson enlisted in the state troops from Connecticut in June, 1776. The company was commanded by his uncle, Capt. Amos Wilson. This company was in the regiment under the command of Col. Fisher Gay for six months service in the defense of New York City. After Col. Gay's death while in New York City, the regiment was then under the command of Lt. Col. Hart. Wilson was discharged on Dec. 25, 1776 from this tour. In the summer of 1777 he served two months guarding the Crom Pond area of Westchester County, NY. In the latter part of Sept. 1777, Wilson volunteered for service in the company of his brother, Capt. Abner Wilson (later Col.), and marched to Stillwater, Saratoga County, N.Y.

He was present at the first Battle of Saratoga, where Gen. Arnold was wounded on Sept. 19th and the second battle where Burgoyne's army was captured and surrendered in October, 1777. After this, Wilson was discharged. The two battles of Saratoga proved to be a turning point in the American Revolution for the struggling Americans. After the war he continued to serve in the local militia, rising to the rank of Captain in 1791. This rank is carved into his original gravestone.

The recorded dates of his death vary by only one day. Pension records show his death as May 24, 1834, while Harwinton and Kalamazoo death records have the date as May 25, 1834. It is interesting to note that his gravestone shows the date May 26, 1839. One wonders if 1839 was the year that the grave marker was made and the carver mistakenly put that year on the stone, or perhaps he mistook the 4 for a 9. Why the date of the 26th is used is another mystery.

Daniel S Wilson's service in the Revolutionary War has now been officially commemorated and recognized.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in 1890 to promote patriotism, preserve American history, and support better education for our nation's children. Its members are descended from the patriots who won American independence during the Revolutionary War. With more than 165,000 members in approximately 3,000 chapters worldwide, the DAR is one of the largest and most active service organizations. To learn more about the work of today's DAR, visit [www.DAR.org](http://www.DAR.org).

### **WATCH FUTURE NEWSLETTERS FOR MORE ABOUT ...**

- **Start of a new Oral History Project and the Annual Appeal**
- **Harwinton Fair October 2, 3, 4 (fair will be open Friday night this year)**