

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

September 2014

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Harwinton Historical Society To Sponsor Program on Reconstruction Following the Civil War

Although the Union proved victorious in the American Civil War, the fruits of that victory were still in doubt. The era of Reconstruction (1865-1877) was the crucial completion of that conflict. Fundamentally, it would determine the future of the United States by attempting to resolve two dilemmas: how to admit the defeated southern states back into the Union and how to prepare 4 million ex-slaves for equality and citizenship.

Dr. Karl Valois, Professor of History at the Torrington branch of the University of Connecticut will lead the discussions of these topics at the **Harwinton Library on two consecutive Sundays: September 14 and 21, 2014 from 2:00 PM to 4:15 PM.**

All are invited. There is no fee or prior attendance requirement although donations are always gratefully received. We hope to see you there!

UPCOMING HARWINTON EVENTS:

- **Sunday, September 7:** The First District Schoolhouse and Barn Museum will be open to the public from 2 to 4 p.m. The buildings are on the grounds of the Harwinton Consolidated School, 115 Litchfield Road.
- Ancestry Library Edition Workshop - **Wednesday, September 10th** at 7:00 pm at the Harwinton Public Library. UCONN Librarian Sheila Lafferty will introduce the ins and outs of the library's new subscription to Ancestry Library Edition. Register by calling the library at 860-485-9113.
- **October 4 and 5 Annual Harwinton Fair. HHS members and friends needed to volunteer to help the Historical Society at this event. Call Bonnie and Dennis Andrews 860-482-7978 if you'd like to be involved.**

*The historical society's 2014-2015 appeal letters will be in the mail in early September.
Please support this annual request.*

A BIT OF TRIVIA

August Trivia Question: Famous abolitionist John Brown is often depicted wearing a long flowing beard. However, for most of his life he was clean shaven. Why did he grow the beard?



John Brown

John Brown was born in Torrington and lived there until he was five years old.

Convicted of murder, slave insurrection and treason, he was hanged on Dec. 2, 1859.

For his abolitionist actions he has at various times been considered a lunatic, martyr, and hero.

Historical Society member Perry Green of New Hartford wrote in with the correct answer to the August trivia question. Perry also offered some additional interesting information about John Brown, history's well-known abolitionist.

Answer to the August trivia question and more (provided by Perry Green): Abolitionist John Brown grew his beard in the latter days of his career to disguise himself during his final preparations for the raid on the Harpers Ferry arsenal in Virginia. He only wore a beard for the last two years of his life. Prior to that era, John Brown had no facial hair at all.

John Brown also used an alias of "Isaac Smith" during those times prior to the famed raid. Brown had needed to have his disguises intact as President James Buchanan had offered a \$250 reward for his capture after several anti-slavery raids in Kansas, and knowing of his plans for another raid.

Some additional historic trivia: The raid at Harpers Ferry was defeated by a unit of US Marines under the command of a Colonel Robert E. Lee, who would have his own sense of fame in the ensuing Civil War.

When on October 16, 1859 John Brown's raid took place; Harpers Ferry was in Virginia. But now that same Harpers Ferry is in West Virginia. WHY? - West Virginia didn't become West Virginia until President Lincoln proclaimed it to be a State on June 20, 1863. (Four years after the raid).

Note: In addition to being directly descended from Harwinton's founding father, Daniel Messenger – Abolitionist John Brown is also in Perry Green's family – he is directly descended from John Brown's grandfather, Captain John Brown of West Simsbury and Revolutionary War fame.

September Trivia Question: What year did 911 emergency phone service begin in Harwinton?

