

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2018

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

email: harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Fall: A Busy Time for Historical Society



Several activities have been scheduled in October, beginning with the annual 3-day Harwinton Fair.

HARWINTON FAIR

This year the fair will begin on **Friday, Oct. 5** with the gates open from 4 to 9 p.m. Activities will continue **Saturday, Oct. 6** from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. and on **Sunday, Oct. 7** from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The Historical Society will open the Country Store, Blacksmith Shop and Shingle Mill on the South end of the fairgrounds as part of the Americana exhibits.

This is a major fund-raiser that provides a great deal of positive exposure for the Historical Society. Anyone who has not been contacted but would like to help should call Nancy Schnyer at 860-485-0035 or send an email to nschnyer0035@charter.net or to harwhistsoc@gmail.com. The switch from land line phones to cell phones and email has made it challenging to contact people so, more than ever, people are being asked to volunteer.

We need members and friends of the Historical Society to contribute bakery goods to sell at the Country Store. Donations may be dropped off at the Country Store on Thursday, Oct. 4, from 4 to 7 p.m., Friday from 1 to 3, or any time during fair hours.

The Take-A-Chance drawing that was very popular last year will return this year with great gift certificates from local vendors.

Anyone willing to help with clean up should come to the Country Store at the fairgrounds Monday morning at 9.

CEMETERY TOUR

“Voices of the Past” a night-time tour of South Cemetery is coming **Friday, Oct. 12th** from 5:30 to 8 p.m. (Rain date is Saturday, Oct. 13).

Visitors will meet some of Harwinton’s most interesting residents of South Cemetery who will tell their stories at the old burial ground. This is intended to be an educational event for all ages that is co-sponsored by the Harwinton Historical Society and Hungerford Museum.

Those attending must start inside Town Hall on Bentley Drive where a free pass will be issued for a shuttle bus that will transport visitors to the cemetery. Groups of about 25 people will leave for the tour in 15-minute intervals. Students from Lewis Mills High School will serve as guides. **No parking will be allowed at the cemetery on South Road.**

Cider and donuts, restrooms, and additional information will be available in town hall. Please note that the cemetery ground is uneven, and it will be dark. Visitors should wear appropriate shoes and may bring a flashlight.

PROGRAMS

Several new programs are being organized by Program Chairperson Candace Jones-Pacholski. These include a visit to a “sacred place” in Harwinton (**Sunday, Oct. 14**) a talk on the Beecher Family (**Saturday, Oct. 27**) and a program on religion (**Sunday, Nov. 4**).

See Programs, page 3

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
SEEKING TWO VOLUNTEERS**

The Harwinton Historic District Commission is seeking two alternate members who currently reside in either of the two historic districts to fill vacant positions. If you know of anyone who has an interest in contributing to the preservation effort in Harwinton, please have them contact Historic District Commission Chairman, Carole Romano at caromano@snet.net

The Harwinton Historic District and Historic Properties Commission



Anyone interested in serving on the Historical Society's Board of Directors is asked to contact one of the directors listed on this page or send an email to harwhistsoc@gmail.com. Directors and officers will be considered for nomination at the October Board of Directors meeting with election in November and installation in January.

Phone Bank

If anyone would be interested in assisting with a phone bank (to communicate Historical Society information about upcoming events and programs to those without email, please send your name and telephone number to harwhistsoc@gmail.com or call 860-482-7978.

TRIVIA QUESTION

In what year did Connecticut adopt a state constitution?

Answer on page 4

OFFICERS – 2018

President: Bonnie Andrews
Vice President: Nancy Schnyer
Secretary: Elaine Sederquist
Treasurer: Harry Schuh

DIRECTORS

Term Ends 2018:

Carol Kearns
David Ryan

Term Ends 2019:

Bruce Burnett
Shirley Gay

Term Ends 2020:

Michael Orefice
Candace Jones-Pacholski

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Eleanor Woike

CURATOR

Bonnie Andrews

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Dennis Andrews

OTHERS (non-board positions)

HISTORIAN

Roger Plaskett

AUDITOR

Marilyn Mitchell

LEGAL COUNSEL

Patrick Wall

Email:

harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Harwinton Historical Society

PO Box 84
Harwinton, CT 06791

860-482-7978

The Barn Corner: KEROSENE LAMPS AND OTHER USES

By David Ryan

Hanging in the Barn Museum are four kerosene lanterns. Near them on a lower shelf are two kerosene cans that were used to fill the lanterns and other heating/illuminating devices in the house or barn.

Once known as "coal oil", kerosene was a by-product of coal gas and coal tar production. This kerosene produced a very smoky and smelly flame, not suitable for indoors. While kerosene was okay for a barn, whale oil - which burned brighter and clearer - was the illuminate of choice.

Things began to change in the 1860's with the development of Drake's oil well in western Pennsylvania. Petroleum replaced coal as the source of kerosene. Kerosene, once a trade name, became so widely used that the word became generic (think Kleenex or Jell-o).

One reason that kerosene gained usefulness was the decline of the whaling industry. In 1858, whaling peaked with 199 ships. The Civil War cut into that number. In 1866 there were only 105 whalers remaining, and by 1876 only about 39 vessels hunted whales.

Kerosene use as the main illuminate in homes did not last long. By the late 19th century, electricity began to replace kerosene for lighting homes especially in urban areas. There was no electricity in Harwinton in 1896. Parts of Harwinton would not receive electricity until the 1920's.

Kerosene found other uses besides lighting. On the farm, kerosene was used in some kitchen stoves. Kerosene space heaters were often used in both the house and the barn. Kerosene was also burned in smudge pots in orchards where the black smoke kept the fruit trees from freezing. Kerosene was also used by highway departments. I can remember highway construction zones at road barriers before electricity was used.

Kerosene, Continued on page 5

Programs, continued from page 1

On **Sunday, Oct. 14th**, a field trip is planned to the "Sacred Place" as described by local resident Bob DeFosses. Attendance will be limited to this event, so it is important to have contact information for those wishing to attend. Due to limited parking there may be a need to car pool. If interested, please send your name and a telephone contact number to Candace at cmhjp43@charter.net or call 860-485-9343 so that you can be contacted with details once finalized.

On **Saturday, October 27th** the Historical Society will present a program on the Beecher Family. Historians have often noted that the Beecher family from Litchfield, Connecticut, was the most influential in 19th century America. The public is invited to join Dr. Karl Valois from the University of Connecticut for a lively discussion of the lives and legacies of these remarkable individuals who include Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Rev. Lyman Beecher. The program will take place at the Harwinton Library on Bentley Drive from 2 to 4 p.m. Registration is not necessary and there is no fee, although donations are welcome.

Plans are still being formed for a program on religion led by history professor Peter Vermilyea on November 5.

MEMBERS ATTEND APPRECIATION EVENT



Historical Society members attended a Member Appreciation social on Sunday afternoon, September 26, at the Jason Skinner House on Bentley Drive.

Society Vice President Nancy Schnyer visits with George Beck (photo above left)
Buildings Supervisor Dennis Andrews chats with Board Member David Ryan (photo above right)
Members Martha and Bob Lecko smile for the camera (left photo)

Photos by E. Lyons

Answer to page 2 Trivia Question: Connecticut adopted a state constitution 200 years ago in 1818.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	COMMENT
October 5, 6, 7 (Fri, Sat, Sun)	Harwinton Fair – Locust Road	Volunteers Needed to bake items for sale. Call Nancy at 860-482-7978 !!
October 12 (Friday)	“Voices of the Past” free night time guided tour of South Cemetery 5:30 to 8 p.m.	Get free ticket inside town Hall for shuttle to cemetery. Rain date Saturday, Oct. 13
October 14 (Sunday)	Field trip to Sacred Place (Reservations Limited)	Details will be shared with those attending – call 860-485-9343.
October 24 (Thursday)	Board of Directors Meeting	3 PM Skinner House, Bentley Drive
October 27 (Saturday)	Program topic: The Beecher Family of Litchfield	2 to 4 PM. Harwinton Library (Speaker Karl Valois)
November 4 (Sunday)	Program topic: Religion	2 to 4 PM Harwinton Library (Speaker Peter Vermilyea)
November 29 (Thursday)	Board of Directors Meeting and Nomination officers for 2019	3 PM Skinner House

Kerosene, continued from page 3

I can remember bringing my uncle, a lighting collector, to the Kerosene Lighting Museum in Winchester Connecticut. He reveled at seeing over 500 lamps displayed in the barn. Unfortunately, the museum ceased to exist with the passing of the owner.

While there are many modern substitutes, kerosene still has uses today. It can be used as a solvent for cleaning, for eating through rusty bolts, and in an emergency for heating and lighting if there is a power failure. I still have an emergency space heater, using kerosene in my home.