

# HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2019

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

email: [harwhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:harwhistsoc@gmail.com)

### Historical Society Awards \$1,000 Scholarship



Nicholas Benvenuto is pictured above with Historical Society President Bonnie Andrews, left, and his mother Mary Benvenuto, right. Nick was chosen by the society's Board of Directors to receive this year's \$1,000 award to assist him with furthering his education. Scholarship Committee Chairman Bruce Burnett described Nick as an excellent student with a high grade-point average who has been active in numerous student activities including student government where he served as Senior Class President. He has an interest in the technology that traces the age of historical objects. Nick plans to attend the University of Connecticut School of Engineering. He is the son of Frank and Mary Benvenuto of Harwinton. Members of the Scholarship Committee in addition to Burnett are Martha Lecko and Nancy Schnyer. The scholarship is funded by contributions to the Society's annual appeal.

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### During July: Historical Society will benefit from Stop & Shop Community Bag Program



Stop & Shop has chosen the Harwinton Historical Society as the benefiting non-profit to receive a donation through the grocery store's Community Bag Program for the month of July! The program is simple: Harwinton Historical Society will receive a \$1 donation every time a \$2.50 reusable Community Bag (the one with the large word GIVE on the side). Is sold in July at the Stop & Shop located **931 Torrington Street in Torrington.**

*Please help to spread the word!*

**OFFICERS – 2019**

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

**DIRECTORS**

**Term Ends 2019**

Bruce Burnett  
Shirley Gay

**Term Ends 2020**

Michael Orefice  
Candace Jones-Pacholski

**Term Ends 2021**

Carol Kearns  
David Ryan

**IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT**

**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

**LIST OF UPCOMING PROGRAMS**



**2019**

***Bob Steele's Century*** - Phil Steele:

Sunday, September 15 at 2 - Town Hall Assembly Room

***Trouble in the Land of Steady Habits: Constitution of 1818*** -

Walt Woodward, CT State Historian:

Sunday, October 20 at 2 - Town Hall Assembly Room

***The American St. Nick*** - Peter Lion:

Sunday, November 3 at 2- Town Hall Assembly Room

**Knights of Columbus Museum, New Haven CT** – first or second week of December- possible bus trip -TBA

**2020**

***Mary Lincoln, From Birth to Death*** - Carol Deleppo:

Sunday, February 9 at 2- Location TBA

***The Year Without a Summer*** - Roger Plaskett, Harwinton Historian:

Sunday, March 8 at 2- Harwinton Congregational Church

**19<sup>th</sup> Amendment** - Mariann Millard (First Ladies presenter!):

Sunday, April 5 at 2- Location TBA

Historical Society programs, such as those listed here, are free and open to the public. If you have heard a speaker that you believe should be considered by the Program Committee, please forward your idea to harwhistsoc@gmail.com

**Looking Back 25 years to 1994**



In July of 1994, after a record six votes, Region 10's proposed \$18.7 million education budget passes. The budget vote in Harwinton was 337-399, but Burlington's 715-334 vote was enough to push the spending package through for approval.

*The Barn Corner*

## TURNIP KRAUT MAKER

By David Ryan

In the barn museum is a machine made of wood with a large wooden crank on top (see photo below). Donated to the museum by Eugene Ruot Sr., it is called a “turnip kraut maker.” As a child, I remember dreading having to eat boiled turnips (often at Thanksgiving). One person remarked to me that the turnips “tasted like medicine.” I agreed. They were only palatable when a lot of butter and salt was added.

Turnips are a root crop, and like other root crops, are easily stored for the winter in a cool underground storage room (called a cold cellar or cold room). Turnip leaves are vitamin-packed, and the mineral-rich roots can also be kept over the winter in a cool basement or root cellar. (Just cut the tops off to within half an inch of the roots and sink the turnips into boxes filled with either moist sand or sawdust.)

In the year 1845, Harwinton farmers harvested 7,560 bushels of turnips, making them an important food source. Another old-style way of storing turnips was by making them into “kraut” via a fermenting process like that done with cabbage. The turnips would be peeled and grated (using a kraut maker) and placed in a large pottery crock to a depth of about two inches. A layer of salt (and sometimes sugar) would be sprinkled on the top. Layer after layer would be added until reaching the top of the crock. Once filled, a ceramic cover (often a dinner plate) was placed on top of the layers. Then the top was held down by a weight (such as a clean, heavy stone) to seal out air. The crock

was kept in a warm place for 10 days to two weeks, after which the turnip kraut was ready to use.

Some useful (and humorous) lessons in making the kraut were learned along the way. One woman decided it was easier to use a wooden plate instead of her good china plate to seal the air out of the crock. All was fine until she tried to remove the wooden plate. It had swelled so much that she could not pull it out of the top. (A neighbor and woodworker came to the rescue and, using a small saw, removed the plate without harming the kraut. Another person thought it was more convenient to use a heavy flat iron as a weight on top of the plate instead of a stone. After 2 weeks the iron and the kraut had chemically interacted, and all, including the iron, had to be thrown away. A third person, knowing that the crock should be stored in a warm place thought the kitchen would be ideal. The “krauty” odor from the fermenting turnips filled up not only the kitchen, but all the surrounding rooms of the house.

Elsewhere, the turnip had a totally different use, especially in England. On Halloween, instead of a pumpkin, the turnip was carved into a jack o’lantern.

The turnip was an important crop, and the turnip kraut maker did its job by helping preserve the vegetable while giving a different flavor to the turnip ... as well as providing some entertainment.

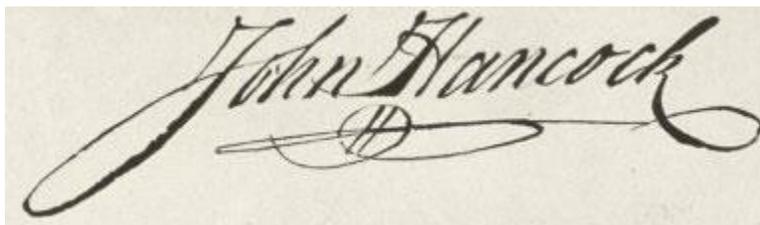
*Sources consulted: Raymond Bentley, John Seymour, internet*



## **FACTS ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

Following are some of the more well-known facts about the Declaration of Independence:

- **56 men** signed the Declaration.
- John Hancock's signature was the largest.
- **Future Presidents** John Adams and Thomas Jefferson signed the Declaration.
- **Samuel and John Adams** were both signers of the document.
- **The Declaration of Independence wasn't signed on July 4, 1776:** On July 1, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, and, on the following day, 12 of the 13 colonies voted in favor of Richard Henry Lee's motion for independence. The delegates then spent the next two days debating and revising the language of a statement drafted by Thomas Jefferson. On [July 4](#), Congress officially adopted the Declaration of Independence, and as a result that date is celebrated as Independence Day. Nearly a month would go by, however, before the actual signing of the document took place.
- **Eight of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were born in Britain.**
- **One signer later recanted:** Richard Stockton, a lawyer from Princeton, New Jersey, became the only signer of the Declaration of Independence to recant his support of the revolution.
- **There was a 44-year age difference between the youngest and oldest signers:** The oldest signer was Benjamin Franklin, 70 years old when he scrawled his name on the parchment. The youngest was Edward Rutledge, a lawyer from South Carolina who was only 26 at the time.
- **Signers from Connecticut:** [Samuel Huntington](#), [Roger Sherman](#), [William Williams](#), [Oliver Wolcott](#)

A photograph of the handwritten signature of John Hancock, which is the largest signature on the original Declaration of Independence. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J' and 'H'.