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Windsor House Tour 2018

by Ed Paquette

Come and explore some of Windsor's architectural treasures

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Connections

by Christine Ermenc

Read the latest Executive Director's Report

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Upcoming Events

See what's happening this spring at WHS!

Windsor Historical Society House Tour

Saturday April 28, 2018 10am-4pm,
by Ed Paquette

History is dynamic and evolving. It tells the stories of diverse peoples from varied places over long periods of time. Nowhere is this more evident than when looking at the six houses on the 2018 Windsor Historical Society house tour. All of these properties have evolved since they were built across four centuries. Some still bear a striking resemblance to their original intended form. Others have evolved so much as to be barely recognizable.

Collectively, these structures have served as a post office, general store, bed & breakfast, corporate office, factory, rental property, and private home. They have housed sea captains, merchants, businessmen, farm workers, and homemakers. They have sheltered short-term renters and travelers from far away. They were owned by members of Windsor's founding families and by working class immigrants from eastern Europe. Three of the houses have more than doubled in size over the years while one remains almost unchanged from its origins centuries ago. Behind every addition, modern touch, and preserved element is a story about the occupants and their journey to Windsor. Each of these homes tells a story. And these stories

enhance the rich narrative that explains how Windsor evolved into the community it is today.

Please join us to learn more about these houses and about Windsor's continuing evolution.

House Tour tickets can be purchased at the Windsor Historical Society, on our website, and at various locations around town for \$30 in advance of the tour and \$35 on the day of the tour. Here is a preview of the homes you'll be seeing:



124 East Street (1670)

The sign affixed to the front of this house lists the construction date as 1670. If true, this house ranks as one of the oldest still standing in town. As such, it is a treat for any history buff. The current owner has gone to great lengths to reveal and restore many of the original features including wood and peg beams in the dining room and feather edge boards in the laundry room. Axe

marks are still visible on the living room ceiling beams. And the original oven crane is now proudly on display after the owner uncovered it when he restored the kitchen fireplace and oven.



96 Palisado Avenue (1758)

This house was formerly known as the 1640 Lt. Fyler House. It was, in fact, constructed in 1758 by the Strong family that built the initial gambrel-roofed structure. Major additions were made from the 1770s through the 1830s by the family of seafaring captain and merchant Nathaniel Howard. The building has been painstakingly reinterpreted to 1810 and includes exquisite reproduction furnishings in addition to many original features. The living areas are complemented by rooms that, at one time, served as a post office and merchant's shop.

(Continued on page 11)

OUR MISSION

Windsor Historical Society invites people to connect with Windsor's evolving history by preserving, interpreting, and sharing our community's artifacts and stories.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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Christine Ermenc, John Mooney, Michelle Tom, Kristen Wands

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Christine Ermenc
Executive Director

Connections

A lovely winter tradition that has developed here is the student exhibition *Layers of Home*. Students tour our historic district in early fall, absorbing the history behind the buildings and landscapes they see. They spend the last months of the year creating collages—sculptural, photographic, mixed media—and preparing artist statements outlining the ideas behind the art they create.

One student, who admits that she often feels isolated, was drawn to the communal feel of a smaller and more connected Windsor of centuries ago. Her collage features zombies, chosen to represent the ways modern Windsor residents can become disconnected from one another as they embrace new technologies. But there's hope in her piece too; white stitches throughout allude to her hope of knitting our community together once again. This student says that her participation in this class has led her to "appreciate the ground [I walk] on every day a little bit more."

Another student symbolizes Windsor with a "living, ever-growing lineage of trees and roots that keep our community together." A third student who created a ceramic collage, notes in his statement:

"When viewers look at my work, I want them to consider how we can find inspiration all around us, from trees, to architecture, to history."

These students' thoughts are similar to those of novelist Sebastian Junger who writes, "We know that people will feel better psychologically if they

have more involvement with their community." Farmer/poet Wendell Berry says, "When a community loses its memory, its members no longer know one another, no longer trust one another, and can hardly avoid harming one another."

This is why the word "connect" is such an integral part of our past and present mission statements. This is why our upcoming house tour is not just about seeing how Windsor residents furnish their homes, but about getting to know our neighbors a little better, sharing the lives of prior home-owners with participants, and coaching them about how to look at architectural and landscape features.

You are a member because you value the connection we provide to Windsor. How about bringing a friend along to a program sometime? Or sharing a social media post you particularly like? Or stopping by to be inspired by a student art exhibit? Staff members work every day to extend our web of connections in the community, whether it's through real-life or social media activities. As we approach our second century of existence, the means of building a web of community may have changed, but the necessity of linking up with one another, of telling our community's stories to one another however we can, that remains essential!



WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bridging Centuries. Bridging Cultures.

Annual Report 2016 - 2017

Our Mission

Windsor Historical Society invites people to connect with Windsor's evolving history by preserving, interpreting, and sharing our community's artifacts and stories.

Our Hope for the Future: Our Vision

Knowledge of local history gives the Windsor community and visitors a connection to the past, an understanding of the present, and a sense of responsibility for the future.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Examining the Underpinnings

This was a year of examining and making improvements in our organizational infrastructure—the less appealing, often invisible to the public but absolutely essential organizational underpinnings that keep operations running smoothly. Thanks to a Strategic Technology Grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG), we upgraded from DSL to a cable internet provider and installed new wireless internet access points that reach into basement storage areas and the Strong-Howard House for the first time. Researchers in our library were finding internet connections spotty; since the new system was installed, complaints have stopped. This grant also funded a new database, a new photocopier, and the design of a new website that for the first time allows online event registration and includes a new “News and Stories” section, all integral in helping us fulfill our mission of effectively and efficiently sharing our resources.

Thanks to another grant from HFPG, we hired a consultant for Strategic Planning, who needed to come up to speed quickly with the outer and inner workings of Windsor Historical Society. Could we send her bylaws, board, staff and volunteer manuals, policies and procedures (yes); financial, investment, and collections policies and procedures (yes); audits (yes); annual performance appraisals for staff (yes) and board (no); maps of our facilities and equipment (some), outcome reports for prior strategic plans (no) and so on. In future, we will work on developing suggested procedural documents that we do not yet have in place.

We signed a lease with the Town of Windsor for use of the Chaffee House in May, 2016 and quickly turned our attentions to the replacement of an old oil-burning furnace in the basement as part of our year-end appeal. Despite the banality of the request, our members, familiar with the necessity of a working furnace, responded generously. See how many good things are made possible by granting agencies and a charitable membership? Thank you!

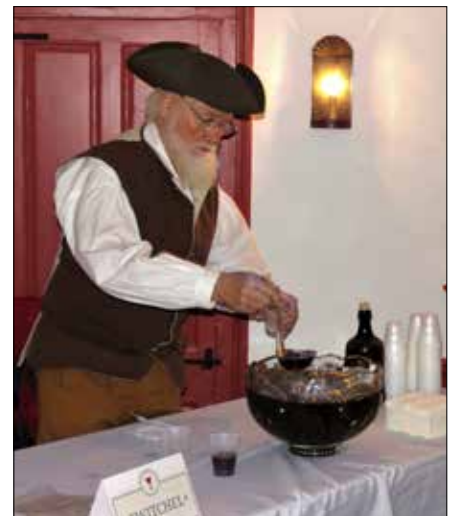
Christine Ermenc
Executive Director

YEAR IN REVIEW

Programs and Services

While we don't have official policies governing program content, we have consciously offered a variety of program types each year (outdoor tours, Windsor/Connecticut history programs, family programs, historic food and drink programs, living history programs, and genealogy programs), monitoring attendance at each, and tabulating audience evaluations for grant-funded program series.

Our free monthly Learn-and-Play series for young families, which seemed like such a good idea, drew few people. The grant-funded living history programs in the Strong-Howard House received ecstatic responses from attendees but are expensive and time-consuming to run, again drawing modest attendance. Most granting agencies are happy to start programs like these, but want them to sustain themselves. Unless we can find an angel to step up and underwrite these programs, we can only afford to offer them once or twice a year, excellent as they are.



Bob Bell serving colonial drinks during our very popular program. Photo by Mike Taylor.



*This little girl stole our hearts during the Presidents' Day candle dipping event in 2017.
Photo by Michelle Tom*

We are constantly experimenting with new programs, collaborating, and trying to draw in new audiences. A new community program committee took on the planning for a community-wide scavenger hunt of historic sites. You'll hear more about this in next year's annual report. In the spring, we also inaugurated a free monthly genealogy support group, which filled the library at its first two sessions.

A small grant from Connecticut Humanities funded a modest World War I exhibit and provided us with the opportunity to collaborate with our community television station WIN-TV on creative publicity showcasing the exhibit. It's a natural alliance that will continue in future years. Historian Bev Garvan's bus tour was the capstone of a year's research into twentieth-century Windsor businesses around Broad Street Green; it's great to have these businesses documented. We broadened the collaborative TourWindsorCT mobile website to encompass historic sites throughout town, and redesigned our own website to make historic content more publicly accessible.

Recent events remind us that history can be inspirational—and troubling. John Mason's statue on Palisado Green became a flash point in 2015 when Loomis Chaffee School decided to rename their Mason Hall dormitory, and a Windsor Town Council member petitioned to have the statue removed from a maintenance contract. The Society stepped in to provide context about the 1637 Pequot War and John Mason's life. As our mission directs, we invite people to connect with Windsor's evolving history

by preserving, interpreting, and sharing our community's artifacts and stories. For us, the statue is a pathway into the different and sometimes disquieting world that was seventeenth-century Connecticut, thus worthy of preservation.

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Collections

A collections management policy informs our staff and collections committee as to what we can accept into Windsor Historical Society's collections. We have detailed donation, accession, and cataloguing procedures in place. A modest but accumulating Collections Reserve Fund receives contributions from our general operating funds each year. Most collections items received are donations, but the Collections Reserve Fund (which also has policies governing its use) allows us to judiciously consider museum purchases. We regularly monitor temperature and humidity in collections storage and exhibitions areas and an annual collections supplies budget line further assists us in preserving the artifacts we house.

The Connecticut Humanities grant mentioned above partially funded the restoration of six beautiful World War I posters we put on display as part of the World War I exhibit. The poster donors and collections supplies funds furnished the remaining balance.

The Society accepted for its collections 20th-century items like scrapbooks about Windsor's Gray-Dickinson Post of the American Legion from the Windsor Senior Center and the Windsor Town Manager's office, a VFW Military Order of the Cooties hat from the late 1950s covered with collector pins, color slide images of Windsor from the 1960s, a scrapbook compiled about the 1979 tornado that struck Windsor, a score card for the Sage Park Race Track from the 1920s, a 1909 Windsor High School diploma, and issues of the L.P. Wilson Junior High School's newsletter *Spartan Scroll* from 1966-1967. Nineteenth-century items received included two land deeds, and a tea gown that belonged to Harriet Louise Stiles Gardiner, a niece and briefly a housemate of the Stiles sisters who lived in our Strong-Howard House.

Long-time member Dr. Daniel Mack passed away earlier in the year. His family donated three bricks from the Mack Brickyard including one inscribed and dated by young Daniel in 1934, and an oversized brick that family members say is one of the first bricks made by the company, established in the 1830s. The Society continues to collect and preserve materials pertaining to Windsor's history; please think of us as a resource and repository.



Brick inscribed by Dr. Dan Mack 1934.
Photo by John Mooney.

Museum and library collections continue to be the basis for many exhibits, PowerPoint presentations, and bus tours mentioned in the programs section — vehicles that bring history outside our walls and into places where the public gathers.

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Sustaining and Strengthening the Society

We are enormously fortunate to have an endowment that funds two-thirds of our operations. This is because a number of people who cared about the Society made bequests in their wills. We supplement endowment funds with grants, membership dollars, fundraisers, appeals, and admissions fees. We are conservative about management of our endowment; investment objectives and an investment policy plus an investment transfer policy govern its use. The endowment has seen modest but steady growth since the economic downturn of 2008-09, with a slight market correction early in 2015. We are audited once a year and financial reports from our auditor are included in each annual report.

Prompted by our auditors who felt we had an excessive amount of our holdings in cash, the Society's Finance Committee met several times to explore a variety of investment vehicles. At the end of the fiscal year, the committee recommended and the Board of Directors approved a strategy to maximize interest income with brokered bond funds and laddered CDs.

Much staff time went into transferring data from our old membership and development database into a new one which synchronizes easily with the new website and PayPal. We are now able to accept donations, membership fees, gift shop purchases, and event registrations online. Thanks to all who helped us gross \$16,700 in auction funds and \$15,625 for a Chaffee House fund that will underwrite a new furnace and interpretive improvements to the house.



Looking Ahead to 2017-2018 Fiscal Year

In the upcoming year, expect to see a few new initiatives emerging from the new Strategic Plan. Procedures and policies will be solidified as we prepare for our 100th anniversary in 2021 and for a new executive director to carry us forward into our second century. It has been a great first century, don't you think?

Sue & Michelle at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference in April 2017 in Springfield, MA . Photo by Jenny Horner Hawran.

STAFF

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Christine Ermenc

*Curator of Collections
and Interpretation*
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Librarian & Archivist
Michelle Tom

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Educator and Outreach Manager
John F. Mooney IV

Facilities Coordinator
Walt Stevenson

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Activities year ended June 30, 2017

Change in unrestricted net assets

Operating revenues, gains, and other support:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Contributions and grants | \$ 51,190 |
| Fundraising events | 13,903 |
| Programs, admissions, and publications | 16,143 |
| Interest and dividend income, net | 14,088 |
| Membership | 12,685 |
| Store sales | 4,830 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | 311,368 |
| Total operating revenues, gains, and other support | <u>424,207</u> |

Operating expenses:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Program services | 243,495 |
| Supporting services | 46,261 |
| Fundraising services | 42,679 |
| Total operating expenses | <u>332,435</u> |

Income from operations: 91,772

Other changes in unrestricted net assets:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Net realized and unrealized gains/(losses) | 34,247 |
| Depreciation | (117,513) |
| Change in unrestricted net assets | <u>8,506</u> |

Change in temporarily restricted net assets

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Contributions and grants | 33,374 |
| Interest and dividend income, net | 205,953 |
| Net realized and unrealized gains | 470,488 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | (311,368) |
| Change in temporarily restricted net assets | <u>398,447</u> |

Total change in net assets 406,953

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*Our monthly Genealogy Support Group is a great way to meet fellow ancestor hunters!
Photo by Michelle Tom.*

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Gail Tinto
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Dawn Whitney
Windsor Civitans
Windsor Garden Club

ANNUAL GIVING

The following individuals, businesses, foundations, and granting agencies made gifts to support general operating costs, programs, and exhibitions at the Society between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. Their names appear in the category that reflects their giving totals for this period. We make every effort to ensure accuracy in this report. Please report omissions and errors to the Society.

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\$10,000 or greater

Estate of Gordon Ulmer
Estate of Walter Becker
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

\$1,000 to \$4,999

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William & Paula Clapp
Connecticut Humanities
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Robert & Dorothy McAllister
Mike & Lu Rabbett
Robert Welch

\$500 to \$999

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William Hosley & Christine Ermenc
Alice Patton
Mike & Lu Rabbett
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Peter & Lisa Souza
Helene Westenburg

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Randall & Carla Clark
Tony Davenport
Randall Graff
Donald & Sue Joffray
Willa Nemetz
Lon & Jane Pelton
Timothy & Jane Reinsch
Marian Sorbo
Al Stalb & Suzie Jacques

\$100 to \$249

Megan & Michael Adams
Wilson Alford
Anonymous
John Bainbridge
Deborah Baker
Christopher Barber
Robert & Jane Bell
James Bennett
Sharren Selig Bennett
Eugene Bissell
Al & Marilyn Boehm
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Gertrude Hotchkiss Trust
Andrew & Claudette Johnson
Laurence Johnson
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Lita Keyser
Evelyn & Robert King
Barbara Kline
Alice Kugelman
William Leary
Charlene Li
Cheryl Lindberg



*The Mason lot dig with CT State Archaeologist Dr. Brian Jones had us captivated!
Photo by Michelle Tom.*

Aubrey & Marilyn Loomis
Edward Lukstas
Judith Matta
Liz McAuliffe
Alfred & Betsy McKee
Hugh & Kate McLean
Linda Mihalek
Lawrence & Donna Myers
Marilyn & Howard Neuschaefer
Jenifer Noble
Martin & Pam Noreika
Judy Oliverio
Colleen Olson
Edward Paquette &
Christopher Catania
David & Mary Lou Peters
John Phillely
John & Margaret Quigley
Pauline Sundt
James Trocchi
Allan & Susan Viner
Mark Walker
Wilson Paint & Wallpaper
Center, Inc.
Diane & Gary Whitney
Kathrine & Richard Wise
Barbara Zawrotny
Susan Zorro

Gifts under \$100

Linda Alexander
Darlene Anderson
Anonymous
Dorothy Armstrong
David Baram
Diana Barnard
Brigette Becker
John Bednarz
Ruth Bockus
Edward Bogus
Elaine Brophy
David Lile Brown
Marie Bruhn
Edward Bulewich
Beverly Callan
William L. Campbell
Endres Campbell
Liz Carlin
Dorothy Carlson
Robert E. Clark
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Robert Gange
Beverly Garvan
Geissler's Supermarket
David Gillette
Doris Hayden Gorgas
Barbara Gridley
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Sylvia Miller
Anita Mips
Florence Morrill
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Michael Panik
Elizabeth Parker
Ann Parkhurst
Holly Pelton
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Connie Thomas
Gail Tinto

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Patricia Vibert
Janet Wallace
Patricia Wright
Colette Yeich
Randy Zaino
Elda Zulick

Corporate Match Donation

Aetna
CIGNA
GE Foundation
Lincoln Financial Foundation
Travelers
United Technologies

In-kind Donations

Sterling Viets
& Rainbow Bus

Memorial & Honorary Gifts

In memory of Edward Darcy
Joan Juba
In memory of Dorothy Hansell
Wayne Dombkowski
In memory of Margaret Jedziniak
Coralee Jones
In memory of Jim Mason
Marsha Mason
In memory of Hans Westenburg
Helene Westenburg
In memory of Barbara Reardon
Colette Yeich

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Descendants of the Founders
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Shad Derby Bureau
Lynne Stefanetti
Barbara Tanguay
Michelle Tom
Ty Tryon
Ruth & William Westervelt
Windsor Fife & Drum Corps,
on behalf of Helen
Rozman Chevier and
Jeanne Mirek Dillon
Windsor High School
Windsor Public Library
Windsor Senior Center
Windsor Town Hall

"First of all, the weather could not have been improved upon - it was glorious! Secondly, the number of families was such a welcome sight! And seeing the kids so engaged was terrific. We were all helping each other and enjoying the search.

In this climate of hate and divisiveness, the day was a welcome change and reinforced my belief in what America stands for. Thank you, and the others who helped, for creating an interesting look at some of Windsor's history.

Ralph and I had fun!"

Cynthia Redman at Windsor History Hunt

(Continued from page 1)



141 River Street (1870)

This seemingly simple farmhouse was built and occupied by members of Poquonock's burgeoning Lithuanian population in the mid-19th century. It occupies a prime location overlooking the Farmington River. One can sit on the front porch and listen to the flowing currents while watching the river birds. Most recently, this two-over-two structure more than doubled in size with the addition of a spacious gourmet kitchen and the creation of a bedroom retreat and a spa-like en suite. A workshop behind the house will be open on the day of the tour and will showcase some of the many crafts produced by the artist resident.



1046 Windsor Avenue (late 1800s)

This house has been described as representing the Queen Anne style with Colonial Revival details. However, a close study of its interior architecture reveals that it was originally a simple farmhouse, built by Nathaniel Barber or Gurdon Loomis. The addition of a second roof and turret transformed the

dwelling into one resembling a Queen Anne style home. Wealthy businessman Charles R. Hart eventually occupied the house and added Colonial revival details such as a Palladian window and a wooden heart over the center gable. Colorfully painted scalloped and diamond-shaped wood shingles grace the upper floors. The large, distinctive chimneys and rounded tower give this home the impression of a castle.



33 Mechanic Street (1891)

First Town Square Condominiums is a complex of three 3-story brick and concrete industrial buildings converted to 55 condos of varying sizes and styles. Before being redeveloped as condos, the buildings housed arms manufacturers, tobacco producers, and Combustion Engineering. The original building was constructed in 1852 and was rebuilt in 1882 following a fire. Building B, the location of the condo on the house tour, was built in 1891, and was the home of motor manufacturers Eddy Electric

Company in 1885 and General Electric from 1902 to 1927.



124 Preston Street (1924)

"The Glen Falls is an exclusive and pleasing Dutch colonial home. Picturesque, dignified and hospitable are three cardinal points that are outstanding characteristics." These words from an early 1920s Sears Roebuck house catalogue are an apt description of this Windsor Center house. The catalogue's picture and floor plan, which are on display in the home's sunroom, provide compelling evidence that this may, in fact, be a Glen Falls model. An updated kitchen and an open, sunny interior blend perfectly with charming original features including wood floors and built-in shelving. A walk through the doorway provides a peek into the lives of Windsor's growing middle class in the early part of the 20th century when the town's population more than doubled and Windsor started to resemble the community we know today.

All Photos by Priscilla Ford.

Visit us

Admission is free to browse the museum store, the *450 Years of Windsor Stories* galleries, and the Hands-On-History Learning Center.

Wednesdays - Saturdays
11 AM - 4:00 PM
closed on major holidays

Tours of Historic Houses
11 AM & 1 PM

Tours & Library Admission
\$8 Adults
\$6 Seniors & Students
FREE for children under 12
and WHS members

Can't make it to the Society in person? For in-depth research resources, check out our website, windsorhistoricalsociety.org

Upcoming events

For more information contact the Society at 860-688-3813 or info@windsorhistoricalsociety.org

May 3, 5:30 PM to 7 PM

First Thursdays Genealogy Support Group

Located in Windsor Historical Society's library. Just starting out? Experienced but stumped? Want access to Ancestry.com including World Explorer? Join others for discussion and problem-solving. Laptops welcome!

Free

May 10, 6:45 PM to 8 PM

Recent Archaeological Discoveries at the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead

Windsor Historical Society and the Homestead co-sponsor a program with State Archaeologist Brian Jones. Join us at 6:45pm at the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead (778 Palisado Avenue) to view the site of recent excavations. Then Jones will share what he found and show what it reveals about 17th and 18th century Windsor life.

\$6 adults, \$5 seniors and students, \$4 WHS members.

May 20, 1 PM to 2:30 PM

More Shad After Shad Derby!

Rainbow Fish Ladder and Farmington River Power Company Tour sponsored by Windsor Historical Society. View migrating fish, fish ladders, turbines, and generators at work and discover

the history of this fascinating and largely unexplored corner of Windsor. Reservations necessary by May 19.

\$6 adults, \$5 seniors and students, \$4 WHS members. Rain or shine, thunderstorm cancels.

June 7, 5:30 PM to 7 PM

First Thursdays Genealogy Support Group

Located in Windsor Historical Society's library. Just starting out? Experienced but stumped? Want access to Ancestry.com including World Explorer? Join others for discussion and problem-solving.

Free

June 9, 11 AM to 3 PM

Hands-On History Open House Day with Hearth Cooking

As part of Connecticut Open House Day, see a working model of the Windsor Locks Canal in operation, bring the kids to our Learning Center to play, and tour Windsor Historical Society's nationally award-winning hands-on Strong-Howard House. Try some games and simple colonial chores, and see what hearth cooking is all about.

Free

June 15, 6 PM to 8 PM

Historic Herb-Infused Drinks

From mint juleps to shrubs, sample and learn the history of some favorite alcoholic beverages. Delicious herbal sweet and savory snacks included. Over 21 only.

\$15 adults, \$14 members

June 20, 7 PM to 8 PM

Making Things in Windsor

Popular lecturer Bob Bell returns, focusing on tobacco, bricks, and guns made right here in Windsor. Discover where the factories were, what manufacturing processes were involved, and who worked in these industries. And what's being made in Windsor today? Program follows short annual meeting.

\$6 adults, \$5 seniors and students, WHS members FREE.

July 28, 9 AM to 10:30 AM

Medicinal Herbs with Horticulturist Gordon Kenneson

Gordon Kenneson will share research into old medical texts and recipe books which has yielded fascinating herbal remedies, some still used, some blessedly not! Plus learn about some exciting plans for the Society's historic doctor's office. Outdoor program if weather permits.

\$6 adults, \$5 seniors, \$4 WHS members

August 2, 5:30 PM to 7 PM

First Thursdays Genealogy Support Group

Located in Windsor Historical Society's library. Just starting out? Experienced but stumped? Want access to Ancestry.com including World Explorer? Join others for discussion and problem-solving. Laptops welcome!

Free

