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WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL IN STYLE!



Celebrants surround our new Centennial Exhibit banner on the night of our birthday bash. Photo by Defining Studios.

Apparently, Hurricane Ida didn't get the word that Windsor Historical Society's 100th Anniversary was September 1, 2021. But a one-day postponement did not deter the 130 people who came out a day later on September 2, to mark the occasion in high style! Rung-in by church bells, the event included a new exhibit featuring the Society's past century by curator Kristen Wands, speeches by local elected officials, recognition of past leaders, champagne toasts, and a special birthday cake.

Welcomed by executive director Doug Shipman, guests learned of the Society's first meeting of 17 Windsor residents on September 1, 1921 to form the organization and begin planning for the Town's 300th anniversary in 1933. One hundred years later, the Society boasts over 500 members and supporters, and like its predecessors, looks forward to celebrating the town's 400th anniversary 12 years

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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.

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Sulema DePeyster, Rain Ifill,
Doug Shipman, Michelle Tom,
Kristen Wands

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Sue Tait Porcaro, *Office Manager*

Doug Shipman, *Executive Director*

Michelle Tom, *Librarian/Archivist*

Kristen Wands, *Curator*

Visit us

Admission is free to browse the museum store, the *450 Years of Windsor Stories* galleries, and our new *Centennial Exhibit*

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

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

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



Doug Shipman
Executive Director

With one step into the next century, what have we achieved?

With our centennial celebrations (just) behind us, it's important to ask ourselves "to what end?" How did we celebrate and why, and what have we achieved?

When I finished graduate school, after four years of working two or three jobs and attending school part time, I skipped the graduation ceremony thinking that it wouldn't matter. It was a mistake that I have regretted ever since, and you can bet I was there with bells on for my next graduation!

We all need to celebrate our milestones and accomplishments, to allow ourselves to feel the joy and satisfaction of a job well done, and to celebrate in community with others.

On September 2, we did just that – with as many as could still attend given the shift in dates (about 130 people). We popped the corks, shared images and stories of our past century, acknowledged past and present leaders, offered some toasts, cut the cake, and rejoiced in our community. It

was a splendid evening. Thanks to so many who made it so, and so many who got us to this point in our own history. What a pure joy! (If you missed this, by the way, you can watch it on WIN-TV's YouTube channel at bit.ly/100thBirthdayBash. We also set out to make our centennial a celebration of the entire Windsor community – not just a celebration of ourselves – and we've been doing this as well. Through a series of events we called "Windsor on the Move," the Society went out to Windsor's five traditional hamlets – Hayden Station, Poquonock, Rainbow, Wilson, and Windsor Center – to celebrate their history and ask people to share their Windsor stories.

Five events and many conversations later, the results have been uplifting. We have made dozens of new friends all across the town and importantly, demonstrated that we are committed to being the historical society for all of Windsor's many diverse residents, both past and present. Indicators include the fact that over 50 people have shared their personal stories with us in the past two months, and almost 400 have placed themselves on our giant Windsor map, helping us build a striking visual representation of the town's rich diversity (see photos on pages 10 - 11). Dozens of Society volunteers, valued community partners like WIN-TV, and every staff

member committed countless hours to organizing and running these events and to collecting so many Windsor stories. Thanks to all!

It would be dishonest of me not to say that many of us are a bit relieved that these events are behind us. The events, exhibits, promotions, and story collecting were an enormous amount of work! And this is just the beginning – of

our next century and of a new way of being and engaging with our community. We have many more important stories to collect and to share, and many more ideas for upcoming projects and programs, but hopefully we can accomplish these at a slightly less frenetic pace!

Stepping into the beginning of the next century together is a marathon, not a sprint.

We have taken the first step. Together. Only 99 years and 11 more months to go. Let's keep stepping!



Welcome, Rain!

Rain-Michelle Ifill, Program Director

I am Rain-Michelle Ifill, but you can call me Rain. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York in the late 1980s, migrated to the South to pursue undergraduate studies in African American history & culture, then returned to the place of my West Indian American upbringing a decade ago. After studying Museum Education & Leadership in Community-based Learning at Bank Street College of Education in New York City, I moved to Baltimore, MD where I designed, facilitated, and managed the Museum Education department for Morgan State University's Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum (LCJM). At the end of 2019, I left LCJM after celebrating the opening of a collections-inspired paper quilt exhibition developed by

students across the city and dedicated to advancing an understanding of civic duty among the city's children, teens, and young adults.

In the words of Lonnie G. Bunch, historian and founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, "The impact, the interpretive resonance, and the clever (or so I hoped) visual juxtapositions [were] now for the public to discover."

So, I moved to the close-knit town of Windsor upon joining the Windsor Historical Society (WHS) as Program Director and am falling in love with the village life and fascinating historical narratives found here.

My job is to collaborate with Windsor's vibrant teachers and community members to design and facilitate inclusive learning



experiences for all ages, always keeping in mind that WHS is well placed to serve as a resource and agent for societal transformation!



Equal Participation: A Historical Overview of WAACA

Sulema DePeyster,
Community History Specialist



WAACA Mission Statement

“The enhancement and facilitation of equal participation within all aspects of the civic, social and economic processes within the Windsor community.”

(1993 WAACA Bylaws)

In 1982, nearly 40 years ago, longtime Windsor resident Willie Graham invited eight black couples into her home to express her concerns about the local community. Graham believed that the minority students in the Windsor school system lacked financial resources and needed scholarships for higher education. Town statistics also indicated low participation from the African American community in social and civic activities throughout Windsor.

To address this, Graham helped found the Windsor Black Caucus, which would later be known as the

Windsor Afro-American Civic Association or WAACA. By 1983, the organization was incorporated by the State of Connecticut with 12 executive officers and would go on to have a significant impact on the lives of Windsor’s Black residents for decades to come.

Community service was a crucial aspect of WAACA, and members were encouraged to participate on town commissions, Town Council, Youth Task Force, Police Athletic League (PAL), and the School Advisory Board. WAACA also hosted a wide array of events over the years, including scholarship fundraisers and workshops to help students in the college application process. Each year, the organization selected two students to receive one of the following scholarships – the Willie Graham Scholarship and the Billie Rodgers Scholarship, both of which are named

after late members of the association. WAACA even participated in the Shad Derby by sponsoring events and candidates for the Shad Derby Pageant.

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY BEGINS THE WAACA RESEARCH PROJECT

In order to gain further insight into WAACA, Windsor Historical Society and Dr. Fiona Vernal of the University of Connecticut have begun conducting oral history interviews with several members of the organization. Some of the interviewees include Florence Barlow, Richard Quintero, Cheryl and Tim Curtis, and Joan Huyghue, all of whom continue to be active members of the Windsor community in a variety of ways.

As we continue to develop a coherent narrative on the Windsor Afro-American Civic Association, we invite previous



WAACA Annual Meeting, June 1988. Photos courtesy of Florence Barlow.

members and associates of the organization to tell us about their experience and share any relevant photographs, documents, records, or other related items.

If you would like to discuss your involvement with WAACA, please contact our Community History Specialist, Sulema DePeyster, sdpeyets@windsorhistoricalsociety.org, (860) 688 3813 ext.107.



Shad Derby Queen candidate Lauren Jones poses with WAACA members at the 2001 Shad Derby Coronation Ball.

(continued from page 1)

from now. Board president Agnes Pier reminded guests of the Society's commitment to begin its next century by being "first in our region to center our history and culture on the lives of racially and ethnically diverse members of the community," by ensuring that its work is rooted in the history, stories, and voices of all community members.

Planning committee chairperson Liz Burke and board vice president Randy McKenney presented past Society leaders with special framed photographs, taken by noted Windsor photographer Len Hellerman, of the Society's iconic Strong-Howard House, acquired in 1925 to serve as its first museum building. Honorees included past board presidents Marcia Hinckley, Marillyn Loomis, Jane Pelton, Mark Griffin, John Berky, Ruth

Fahrbach, and Agnes Pier. Former staff members Connie Thomas and Christine Ermenc were also recognized, along with steadfast volunteer leaders Dorothy Ball, Florence Barlow, Elaine Brophy, Marilyn and Al Boehm, and Ruth and Barry Budlong.

Pastor Nicole Grant Yonkman personally rang First Church's bells 10 times – once for each decade of the Society's history – to kick off festivities. Mayor Don Trinks and Representative Jane Garibay marked the occasion with special remarks heralding the importance of the town's history and the Society's role in the community. Amy and Mazwi Cele entertained guests with fiddle tunes to set the festive mood, and the evening closed, as all birthday parties should, with the unveiling of a fabulous birthday cake – an

exacting edible replica of the Strong-Howard House created by Moneta Moments Bakery of Windsor.

It was a "Windsor" evening through and through, including the festive toasts that celebrated the town and the Society, and also poked a little fun at rival Wethersfield "for continuing to give Windsor the opportunity to share its history, which began a year before yours!" All in all, it was a night to remember. A fitting celebration of the town's venerable historical society and a very promising start to its second century. The event, naturally, was well documented thanks to WIN-TV and Defining Studios and is now featured in the Society's archives and on its website for those who missed it. Happy birthday, Windsor Historical Society!



September 2nd proved a much better day for an outdoor event!



Moneta Moments bakery of Windsor created an incredible, edible version of the Strong-Howard House!



Sulema DePeyster, Dr. Fiona Vernal, and Katya Wright



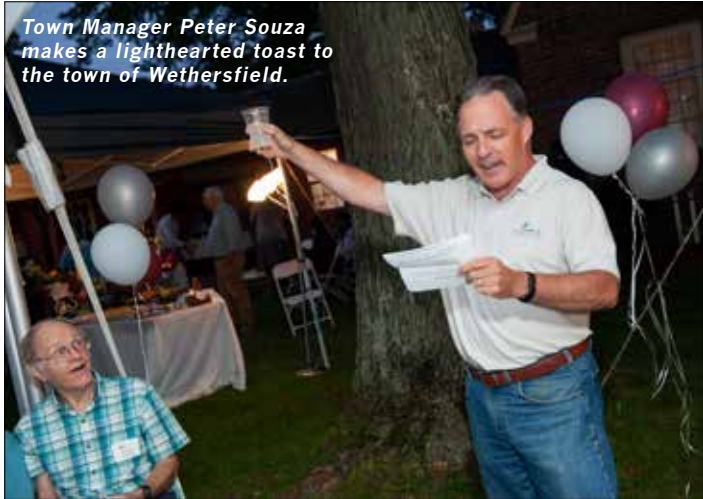
Vice-President Randy McKenney presents former Executive Director Christine Ermenc with a framed Len Hellerman photo.



Honorees Al & Marilyn Boehm, Doug Shipman, and former Windsor Town Manager Al Ilg and his wife Jackie



Michelle Tom photographs Richard & Janet Henderson to add to our giant Windsor map.



Town Manager Peter Souza makes a lighthearted toast to the town of Wethersfield.



Celebration Chair Liz Burke, Honoree Elaine Brophy, and Randy McKenney



State Rep. Jane Garibay and Honoree Florence Barlow



Honoree Dorothy Ball (center) and her daughters Claudia Weiman and Priscilla Barber



Society President Agnes Pier does the honors.

All photos by Defining Studios.

Preserving Windsor's Stories Then and Now

**EXCERPTED AND ADAPTED FROM
OUR 100 YEARS OF WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBIT**

By Kristen Wands, Curator

Because Windsor Historical Society is celebrating its 100th birthday this year, we are looking back at the collections held in the Society's museum and archives and how they have evolved over time. The following is adapted from our new exhibit, *100 Years of Windsor Historical Society*, on view in the meeting room for the next year.

Windsor Historical Society began collecting immediately upon its founding. Initially the Society's goal was only to collect relics and manuscripts of Windsor's past to be exhibited at Windsor's Tercentenary in 1933. Before the end of its first meeting, however, the Society became a permanent organization with a permanent collection.

The very first gifts to the Windsor Historical Society came from George Edward Hoadley in honor of his brother Charles, who was Connecticut State Librarian. They arrived in batches during the Society's earliest days. The first item entered into the collection records is *Marmaduke Multiply*, an illustrated book of



Early accessions of Windsor Historical Society, including Hoadley gifts, the Plymouth Rock fragment, and the Stoughton House window panes. Photo by Kristen Wands.

mathematics for children featuring short poems and colorful illustrations. Hoadley read this book as a child. His signature appears on the flyleaf, along with a note saying it was the first book he ever owned. Other gifts from Hoadley included leaves from the famous Charter Oak in Hartford, as well as a number of documents signed by the founding fathers of the United States, including a military promotion certificate presented to Salmon Clark, which was signed by John Adams, and a proclamation granting pension funds to select Revolutionary War widows signed by Thomas Jefferson.

The second additions to the collection that September were eight pieces of diamond

pane window glass, said to have been taken from the Stoughton House, also known as the Old Stone Fort. These were presented to the Society by Mary E. Mabal and Helen A. Moore, both lineal descendants of Windsor founder Thomas Stoughton who built the Stoughton House on Palisado Avenue in the mid-1600s. The house was dismantled in 1809.

The third item to be added to the collection came from a Willard Chambers Gompf, who was the featured speaker at our first annual meeting. His subject was "Old Windsor." Mr. Gompf was also a member of the Plymouth Rock Association of Massachusetts and presented a fragment of Plymouth Rock at the close of his presentation,

with his assurances of its authenticity. The fragment was a tie between Plymouth, MA and the very first settlers in Windsor, who came here from there.

In the past, Windsor Historical Society collected any artifact deemed old, curious, or representative of the way people lived in 'ye olden times.' The Society was blessed with such generous donors that it has always been in danger of outgrowing its collections storage space. Therefore, the Society developed a collections policy that narrowed the focus of its collections. Today, WHS is far more conscious that the items taken into the permanent collection tell Windsor's unique story and were made or used by the people of Windsor. Today, for example, we probably would not accept *Marmaduke Multiply* into the collection because, charming as it is, the book has no relation to Windsor's history. The Hoadleys, who owned it, never lived in Windsor, and the book itself was printed in London.

Today the Society collects items that represent Windsor's past and retains a strong interest in items related to the founders such as the Bear Bible and the early Windsor furniture featured in our permanent exhibit in the North Gallery. WHS also collects items from Windsor's present:

things that will be historic in the future. For example, last year the Society put out a call for items that tell the story of the COVID-19 pandemic here, which is an ongoing appeal. WHS continues to seek items related to current Windsor events in addition to items related to the town's past



The Society purchased the Fyler House (now the Strong-House) using donations from across the country. The Golden Record is a list of early subscribers to Fyler House Fund. When the house opened to the public in the late summer of 1925, The Golden Record was kept on view in the reception room. Photos by Michelle Tom.

Windsor Historical Society also continues to collect artifacts which are related to our own history as a Society. For example, the Golden Record lists the names of contributors to the Fyler House Fund (now the Strong-Howard House) at the time of its purchase in 1925. We are also preserving photos from our recent 100th birthday party and "Windsor on the Move" events.

In addition to collecting artifacts, photographs, and archival materials with historic importance, Windsor Historical Society has a long tradition of collecting oral histories,

like the ones available for you to listen to on our website and throughout the exhibit via QR codes. We hope you will be inspired to share your own Windsor story with us on social media using #WindsorCTstories.

As Windsor Historical Society steps into its second 100 years of collecting, you can help! If you have stories or artifacts related to Windsor's history, past or present, please share them with us, especially if they tell a Windsor story you haven't seen represented in our exhibits or on our social media before. We rely on the contributions of members of our community in order to be able to tell all of Windsor's fascinating history.



Recent collections at Windsor Historical Society include a photo and face mask representing Windsor's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo by Kristen Wands.

“WINDSOR ON THE MOVE” Takes Our Centennial to Windsor Neighborhoods

Building on the many conversations that were part of our recent strategic planning process, our Centennial Celebration planning committee worked hard to try to make our centennial a celebration of the entire Windsor community. The committee planned a series of events around the September 1

birthday date that took place in the town’s five historic villages – Hayden Station, Poquonock, Rainbow, Wilson, and Windsor Center. A culminating event, called “All Together Windsor” was held on Palisado Green on October 9. The purpose of these events was to celebrate the history of each village and ask people to share their Windsor stories – stories that we have shared back through social media and at each event.

We will provide more thorough outcomes in future newsletters,

but wanted to share a few images of these wonderful events where over 50 Windsor people shared their personal stories, and almost 400 have placed themselves on our giant Windsor map, helping us build a striking visual representation of the town’s rich diversity. Dozens of Society volunteers, valued community partners like WIN-TV, and every staff member committed countless hours to organizing and running these events and to collecting so many Windsor stories!



Colette Yeich adds a picture to the giant map. Photo by Doug Shipman.



Steve Porcaro interviews Beryl Sampson at the Brown's Harvest event on Aug. 28. Photo by Michelle Tom.



Wilson and Deerfield neighbors joined us at L.P. Wilson Community Center. Photo by Mike Taylor.



Florence Barlow and Board member Ashley Coleman discuss Kalaya Moody's visit with Michelle Obama with her and her mother Beverly. Photo by Doug Shipman.



Board member Bob Bell shares his Windsor story with the WIN-TV and WHS interview team. Photo by Doug Shipman.



Jane & Lon Pelton share some "Model T" fun with Florence Barlow at Brown's Harvest. Photo by Priscilla Ford.



Marilyn Boehm and Eileen Curley place the first photos on our giant map of Windsor at Brown's Harvest. Photo by Mike Taylor.



Just a few weeks later our giant map is bursting with Windsor faces! Photo by Mike Taylor.

Many thanks to our volunteers!

We are so grateful to all our volunteers. Between our volunteers, staff, and donors, we are able to accomplish so much more, and even surprise ourselves!

COLLECTIONS

Donna Baron, Marianne Curling, Kevin Ferrigno, and Elizabeth Rose

EDUCATION & EVENTS

Ann Beaudin, Bob Bell, Kaleitha Brown, Liz Burke, Eileen Curley, Cindy Daniels, Ciara Doyle, Mary Kelling, Gordon Kenneson, Judy Locker, Marsha Mason, Roberta Merrigan, Donna Myers, Barbara Tanguay, and Jim Trocchi

FRONT DESK AND ADMINISTRATION

Deb Dusseault, Gordon Kenneson, Joan Lynch, Donna Myers, Ellye Rosenberg, Nanci Scully, Barbara Tanguay, Jim Trocchi, and Dawn Whitney

GROUNDS

Becky and Paul Hendricks, Gordon and Betsy Kenneson, Walt Stevenson, Talcott Resolution, Jim Trocchi, the Town of Windsor, and Windsor Garden Club

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION TASK FORCE

Florence Barlow, Liz Burke, Ashley Coleman, Randy McKenney, Doug Shipman, and Michelle Tom

LIBRARY

Ken Anderson, Elaine Brophy, Ethan Guo, Rob Hoskin, Betsy Kenneson, Iniya Raja

Fall Events Register for any of these programs at windsorhistoricalsociety.org, call us at 860-688-3813 or email us at info@windsorhistoricalsociety.org. Genealogy Support Group and Senior Center Events are free.

Nov. 4 & Dec. 2 (by zoom)
5:30 to 6:30 PM
First Thursdays Genealogy Support Group is back!

Just starting to research your family tree? Experienced but stumped? This informal gathering of fellow researchers engages in lively discussion and problem-solving. After a summer hiatus, we will be back by zoom. Registration required for Zoom meeting link at windsorhistoricalsociety.org. *Free*



Second Saturday Hearth Cooking with Becky Hendricks

Prepare scrumptious colonial dishes in the Strong-Howard House's kitchen open hearth and bake oven under Becky's expert tutelage. Sample each other's creations, then take some leftovers home.

Pre-registration is required. Each program limited to 6 participants. Ages 12 and up. Max 2 participants per family.

Special COVID Requirements:

In order to provide as safe an environment as possible, participants will be required to verify COVID-19 vaccination when registering and wear a face mask throughout the program.

November 13

Everything but the Turkey. Choose between sherried sweet potatoes, sauced apples, carrot pudding, onion pie, wild mushroom pie, sweet potato biscuits, creamed celery with pecans, and apple-currant relish.

December 11

Holiday Sweet Treats. Choose between portugul cakes, almond macaroons, jumbles, apple Charlotte, everlasting

syllabub, Queen's cake, comfits of orange rind, gingerbread cakes, wafers with red currant crême and brandied nuts.

COST: \$40 per person plus estimated \$10-15 food costs. Indoors, face masks required.

For Seniors, in cooperation with the Windsor Senior Center (held at the Windsor Senior Center)



Tuesday, October 19, 1 to 2:30 PM
Windsor Phoenix: Remembering the 1979 Tornado Screening in the Senior Center Café

Experience the tornado of October 1979 through the photos and remembrances of Windsor residents and survivors. Originally produced by Windsor Historical Society and WIN-TV in recognition of the tornado's 40th anniversary, this fascinating documentary will take you back to this momentous natural disaster that affected Windsor for years to come.

Free - at Senior Center

For Seniors, in cooperation with the Windsor Senior Center (held at the Windsor Senior Center)

Wednesday, November 10, 11 AM to 12:30 PM
Honoring Our Veterans, Sharing Our Memories at Senior Center

Windsor-area Veterans are invited to share a special photo or image of their time in uniform as well as their memories about what makes the photo so special! Historical Society and Senior Center staff will assist with collecting and scanning photos so that Veterans can easily share during

the program. Veterans will be able to keep their original photos while helping Windsor Historical Society document the experiences of Windsor men and women in uniform!

To participate, contact Michelle Tom at 860-688-3813 or mtom@windsorhistoricalsociety.org, or mail or drop off the photo at the Windsor Historical Society or at the Windsor Senior Center. All original photos will be returned to owners.

Free - at Senior Center



For Seniors, in cooperation with the Windsor Senior Center (held at the Windsor Senior Center)

Wednesday, December 15, 12 PM to 1:30 PM
Windsor in 1921: The Paradox of Progress at Senior Center

Celebrate the close of 2021 by revisiting the Windsor of 100 years ago. Join Windsor Historical Society curator Kristen Wands for this captivating presentation. Through both documentary video and live discussion, Kristen will bring the year 1921 to life with photos, documents, and artifacts from this pivotal time in Windsor's history and the factors that led to the formation of Windsor Historical Society.

Free - at Senior Center

