

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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Windsor
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BRIDGING CENTURIES, BRIDGING CULTURES

Broad Street Green Architectural Tour

On Saturday, April 25, from 1 to 3 pm, take advantage of this rare opportunity to see inside three historic buildings along Broad Street Green in Windsor. The 1902 Huntington House, now occupied by J. Morrissey, the 1941 VFW building (formerly the Post Office), and the archives vault of the 1967 Town Hall will all be available to the public for this afternoon open house. Tickets are \$10/person (children 12 and under free) and will be available for purchase in advance at the Society beginning April 1 or on the day of the tour at the registration table in front of J. Morrissey. Enjoy lunch at one of Windsor's locally-owned restaurants and then learn about our local history as you walk through these important structures that line the Town Green.



Windsor Town Hall, 1966
WHIS Collections, 1996.55.43.4

Windsor Town Hall, 275 Broad Street

On June 11, 1963, the Windsor Chamber of Commerce donated the first brick to symbolically start the campaign for a new Windsor Town Hall. That brick is still visible in the lobby of the completed building, which opened to the public on January 30, 1967. By the 1950s, the old town hall, located on the east side of Broad Street Green and built in 1878, no longer served the needs of Windsor's growing population. The town began

acquiring property on the west side of the Green in the late 1950s with the purpose of constructing a new complex of municipal buildings, although only the Town Hall was built on the site. The town approved plans in 1965 for the new building designed by Louis J. Drakos and Associates of Hartford. The steel frame structure, covered with Mack brick and limestone, cost approximately \$1.3 million. An eight-week strike by the Local 1, Bricklayers, Plasters, and Masons' Union delayed construction during the summer of 1966, but the building was largely finished by the end of December 1966 when town personnel began moving into their new offices.

The new Town Hall's elevator, fireproofing, and sprinkler system made it a vast improvement over the old structure, and it housed municipal departments as well as the Probate Court and the Circuit Court. During the dedication ceremony on April 9, 1967, Mayor Milo W. Peck was given the keys to the building. He then presented them to Town Manager Albert G. Ilg. The Knights of Columbus Council #3181 and the Freemasons of Washington Lodge #70 laid the cornerstone. The cornerstone holds a bronze time capsule containing a microfilm of the 200th anniversary edition of the *Hartford Courant* and one of the 150th edition of the *Hartford Times*, a copy of the certificate of occupancy for the new Town Hall, a copy of the 1966 Windsor Town Report, and a copy of "Windsor's Heritage" by Miss Grace H. Loomis.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Building, 276 Broad Street

The property at the corner of Elm and Broad Street formerly belonged to William H. Filley, a prominent Windsor dairy farmer and businessman. In 1939 the US Government purchased the site for \$14,000 and razed the Filley homestead in order to erect a new post office building for the Town of Windsor. The classic colonial design featured a brick and stone façade, large windows, and an ornamental eagle over the doorway. The public lobby extending across the front of the building had five service windows and 250 lock boxes. Behind the lobby was a deep work room for sorting the mail, a "swing room" for off duty postal workers, and a 31-foot-long mailing platform.

(Continued on page 3)

**WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Our Mission

The Windsor Historical Society aims to inspire public awareness and appreciation of the diverse peoples, places, and events that contribute to Windsor's evolving history. We preserve and interpret Windsor's historical record through active collecting, research, exhibitions, programs, and communications in the belief that an understanding of history can provide individuals and communities with connections to the past, a sense of belonging in the present, and responsibility for the future.

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Director's Report

Christine Ermenc, Executive Director



It has been a winter to remember -- New England buried under at least three feet of snow, narrowing roadways and parking lots (because there's just no place to put all that snow) and valiant attempts to keep ahead of the ice dams. As I write, we are experiencing our first spring thaw on a brilliant blue-sky day with the steady drip of melting icicles as a background drumbeat. When growing up in New Hampshire, spring would be a long time coming, and days like this made me look forward to church suppers featuring ham and pickles and sugar on snow. Half a century later, now that I'm a Connecticut flat-lander, this thaw is making me think of daffodils, greenery -- and greens.

Here at the Society, we count ourselves lucky to be situated in the heart of Windsor's Historic District, just off the Palisado Green. The landscape surrounding us is very much a part of the history we share with the public. Just north of the Farmington River, once the town's major transportation artery, Windsor's communal Palisado Green served as the militia training grounds and commercial marketplace during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as being the site for the first meetinghouse. By the mid-19th century, with the coming of the railroads and construction of a railroad station south of the Farmington River, commerce shifted south to the Broad Street Green. The once-bustling and commercial Palisado Green became a quiet residential area, and the once-residential Broad Street Green became commercial -- the site now regarded as Windsor's town center.

The Broad Street Green will be focus of some new activities this spring. For many years, the Society has focused programmatic attention on architecture and outdoor art in April and May when people are eager to be out-of-doors. You will read elsewhere in this newsletter about our Broad Street Green Architectural Open House. Society staff members and historian Bev Garvan have amassed an enormous amount of background information on Windsor's architecture and outdoor art over the years, now stored in our collections and in our library files. Because we are guided by our mission to collect, preserve, and share this information as a means of connecting ever-broader audiences with Windsor history, another spring project will be the development of a mobile website filled with information we have compiled about Broad Street Green's architecture and public art.

In the past decade, researchers, tourists, teachers, students, and family groups with an interest in history and culture have come to expect 24/7 access to resource materials through computers and mobile devices. The labor (thus cost) involved in mobile website development is not insignificant. We are happy to have found partners in Windsor's Chamber of Commerce and First Town Downtown who will share in those expenses. All of us think that having multiple layers of meaning for Broad Street Green's rich historic landscape accessible on smartphones will encourage pedestrian activity, curiosity, civic pride, and preservation instincts in Connecticut's first town. Stay tuned!

(Continued from page 1)



A Postcard of the Windsor Post Office in the 1940s
WHIS Collections, 2011.1.97

Pageantry marked Dedication Day on April 26, 1941. A sack of mail including specially-designed first day covers and postcards was picked up at the Windsor Historical Society, location of Windsor's first post office, and transported by stagecoach to the new post office on Broad Street. There the mail was stamped with a unique cancellation mark.



The Stagecoach Delivers the Mail on Dedication Day
WHIS Collections, 1988.2.4.4

Post-war Windsor was a rapidly growing community, and the postal services operations again needed more space. The present post office building on the east side of Broad Street Green opened in 1963. For continuity, the three wooden bas-relief sculptures of tobacco workers were moved to the new building and remounted over the postal boxes.

The Raymond B. McHugh Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was organized at the end of World War II. The group used the columned Greek Revival homestead of Col. Philip Remington at the foot of Stony Hill as their post headquarters for nearly twenty years. By the mid-1960s the group had grown to 650 members. In April 1964 the VFW unit took possession of the vacated post office building and began to make

alterations to suit their needs. Just a few weeks later a roaring fire destroyed the Remington House. Since dedicating their new home in July 1965, this veterans' service organization and its Ladies's Auxiliary have been active in the Windsor community.



The Howes Brothers from Ashfield, MA captured this image of the Huntington House on a glass plate negative in 1902.
WHIS Collections, 1976.5.597

Huntington House, 289 Broad Street

Hundreds of dollars, hours of labor, and a great deal of perseverance saved the Huntington House from the fate of the other large and stately homes that formerly stood on the east side of Broad Street Green. Built during 1901-1902 by Henry and Mary Huntington, the house's unusual configuration is a combination of Neoclassical and Colonial Revival architectural styles. It features two columned porticoes, an open air pavilion on the third floor roof, a sweeping mahogany stairway, marble mosaics, extensive paneling, and tall stained glass windows overlooking the garden.

Clark Huntington, the last family member to reside in the house, passed away in 1998. The Town of Windsor had an option to purchase the house from the estate but declined after months of deliberation. Developer Dan Ferraina stepped in to purchase the property and oversee the more than 13,000 hours of work needed to overcome years of deferred maintenance, make the necessary upgrades, and restore the house to its original splendor.

In 2001 Ferraina leased the house to the newly formed Huntington House Museum. This served as an arts and cultural center for the region for four years before closing its doors. Today the Huntington House is the corporate home of J. Morrissey & Company, Inc., an executive search and staffing firm. Through restoration and adaptive reuse, this symbol of the grandeur of another era maintains its place of honor on Broad Street Green.

New on the Website

In many ways, the Subject File is the heart of the Windsor Historical Society Research Library. These vertical files contain an eclectic mix of newspaper clippings, research notes, ephemera, correspondence, photos, obituaries, and primary documents pertaining to hundreds of topics in Windsor's four hundred year history.

The files also contain extensive cross references to other materials in the Society collections. Broad categories such as **Schools** or local **Businesses** are subdivided for more targeted research. A particular strength is the **Houses** series with documentary material by address for over 250 homes, businesses, or now-demolished properties. The analogous Family File contains similar research materials with folders arranged by surname. The Photograph Files are physically separate, but are ordered with headings identical to the Subject and Family Files.

The Index to the Subject File is now on the website at http://www.windsorhistoricalsociety.org/finding_aids.html. We encourage you to contact the library staff for assistance. Have fun exploring the breadth of our collection!

Warham's Mill Update

We received this letter not long after the June 2014 Newsletter was published and extend our thanks to its author for providing additional information about the history of the historic property at the corner of Poquonock Avenue and East Street.

Dear Ms. Goodwin,

In your story on Warham's Mill (June issue), I note a gap from the mid-twenties until the mid-forties.

During those years the business was owned and operated by Mr. Waldo Everett. His son-in-law, Edwin Lodge, joined him there in the early thirties and in addition to farm supplies, they expanded into home heating oil.

In 1940 Ed Lodge, a member of the National Guard, was called into Federal service and, as I recall, by war's end he was a Major or Lt. Colonel and, with his wife Olive Everett, relocated away from Windsor.

Mr. Everett and his wife, Winnifred, spent their retirement years in their home at 8 Remington Road, next door to my family's home at 6 Remington Road.

As a boy, I was well acquainted with the Everetts. I remember Mr. E. as a very pleasant, kind old man. Mrs. E. was pleasant enough, but used to get somewhat upset as my brother and I and our friends were continually chasing lost balls, model airplanes, etc. from our back yard onto her flower gardens.

Very truly,

Edwin Snelgrove

Volunteers

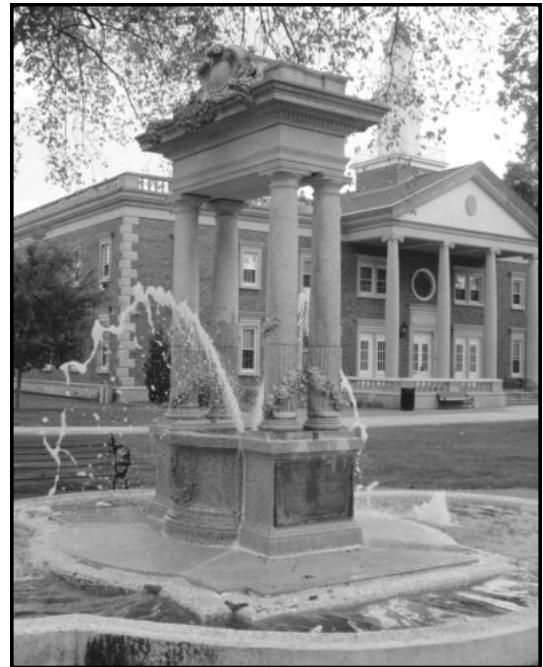
We are so grateful to all our volunteers. Between our volunteers, staff, and donors, we are able to accomplish so much more and even surprise ourselves!

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The Loomis Fountain on Windsor's Town Green
Photo by Christina Vida

Visiting the Society

The Society is open Wednesdays through Saturdays with tours of the historic houses conducted at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. Our admission fee is \$8 for adults, \$6 for students over age 12 years and seniors over 62 years. Society members, children under 12 years, teachers, and New England Museum Association members displaying a card are FREE. Can't make it to the Society in person? For in-depth research resources, check out our website, www.windsorhistoricalsociety.org. For daily updates and historical tidbits, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @windsorct1633.