



**W**indsor's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be in full swing this summer and fall. The celebration continues at the Society with two exciting exhibitions highlighting the Society's rich collection of historic photographs. *Windsor Then and Now: A Photo History: 1890-2008*, on view until August 30, 2008, explores Windsor's changing landscape through historic and modern photographs. The final photograph exhibition in the series, *Faces of Windsor: 1850 to the Present*, opens September 12, 2008, and runs through the end of the year. *Faces of Windsor* uses studio portraits, group photographs, and spontaneous snapshots of Windsor residents to explore the town's social history. Don't miss your chance to see both exhibitions during this very special year!

## Upcoming Photograph Exhibition Explores Windsor's People

Erin Stevic, Curator

The Society's upcoming exhibition, *Faces of Windsor: 1850 to the Present*, features historic photographs of Windsor residents beginning with daguerreotype portraits taken in the 1850s and finishing with digital photographs from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These images reflect Windsor's very diverse citizenry, from native-born New Englanders to members of the many ethnic and racial groups who settled in Windsor during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Photographs of people of all ages, classes, and backgrounds will be on display. Their stories will be used to relate the larger history of work, play, and community in Connecticut's First Town.



Hattie Loomis Mills,  
c. 1862.  
WHS Collections



Moses Williams, c. 1930.  
WHS Collections

lengthy, expensive, and uncomfortable. In the 1820s, John Adams, the second President of the United States, lamented that "speaking generally, no penance is like having one's picture done." Adams spoke from experience having sat for a variety of drawings, paintings, and busts during his long public career. In addition, Adams had his portrait done by physionotrace, a device that traced his profile. He also suffered through the production of a life mask during which his head was encased in plaster to form a mask of his face. While most Americans of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were lucky to have one likeness done of themselves over a lifetime, those who did echoed Adams' complaints of the boredom and discomfort of the process.

The *Faces of Windsor* exhibition uses Windsor photographs to explore the history of portrait photography in the United States from the importance of its invention to its effect on modern living. Before photography, obtaining one's likeness required commissioning an artist to create a portrait or sculpture. The process was

The invention of photography in 1826 changed not only the way portraits were made but allowed people to see

(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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Open Tuesday - Saturday  
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## Director's Message

Christine Ermenc, Executive Director



How has Connecticut's first English settlement celebrated "milestone" birthdays? For starters, we formed a historical society in September of 1921, two hundred and eighty-eight years after English settlers established the roots of our town. The Windsor Historical Society was officially established a year later to collect and preserve artifacts and records, to identify and mark historic buildings and locations, to record history for future generations, to publish, and to prepare for the Tercentenary of Windsor in 1933.

Tercentenary town and church celebrations included an ecumenical church service with a special tercentenary hymn composed just for the occasion, historic pageants in all the schools, a celebratory ball with a dramatic presentation of Windsor history including rhymed couplets and songs, the production of a commemorative coin, and the fabrication of a Farmington River-worthy replica of the ship *Mary and John* which brought many of Windsor's founders across the Atlantic Ocean in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1933, between 20,000 and 25,000 people lined the streets of Windsor to view a parade featuring 50 floats led by Connecticut Governor Wilbur Cross, later satisfying their hunger at food booths erected on the town green in a cooperative effort by the ladies of the Congregational, Catholic, Methodist, and Episcopal churches.

In 1983, the Town of Windsor again drew together a committee headed by Society Director Robert T. Silliman to plan Windsor's 350<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. Again, hard-working committee members organized a celebratory ball. Again, commemorative products were created, including a half-scale reproduction of Windsor's Bissell Ferry made by Lon Pelton to cross the Farmington River. Fifty thousand people lined the route of the 200-unit parade chaired by Lee Alford which included then-Governor Bill O'Neill, Secretary of State Julia Tashjian, and a huge tiered birthday cake which subsequently served 2,000 people thanks to the efforts of Vivian Webster and Frank Parker. New this time was a 120-mile hike from Dorchester, Massachusetts to Windsor which took 35 walkers six days to complete. A road race, garden mart, antiques show and appraisal, and a symposium at Loomis Chaffee School concerning Windsor's future directions were additional features of the birthday celebrations in 1983.

This year, there are many ways to engage with our town's long and fascinating history. Windsor Historical Society's Four Centuries House Tour in April featured eight houses, 130 volunteers, and the Windsor Jesters. It attracted 400 people and raised over \$9,000 for Society operations! Historian Bev Garvan will take a busload of people to well-known and more obscure historic sites around town on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone on the bus tour will receive a souvenir keepsake featuring historic images of the sites they will be seeing. Curator Erin Stevic's *Windsor Then and Now* exhibition, on view at the Society through August,

*(Continued on page 5)*

Photograph Exhibition (Continued from page one)

themselves in new ways. Instead of portraits or sculptures whose quality depended on the artist, photographs were exact likenesses of their subjects. They were also quicker to produce and involved a far less uncomfortable process than other media. The realism and convenience of photographs quickly made them more desirable than drawn portraits. By 1845, photography studios were found in every large American city and town.

Since photographs were still rather costly in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a middle or upper-class person often had only one or two photographs taken of him or herself. By the 1880s, changes in the photographic process made photographs cheaper, allowing middle-class Americans able to afford more than one sitting at a studio. Between the 1890s and 1920s, new cameras were invented that were easier to use and transport, bringing photography into the hands of amateurs. Soon photographs became so common that they were traded as mementos. They were also used to record special life events like weddings and anniversaries. Rolled film in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and digital technology

in the 21<sup>st</sup> century continued to increase the availability of photographs and change the ways photographs are taken, copied, and shared.

Situated between Hartford and Springfield, Windsor residents had access to a variety of photo studios during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and followed national trends in camera and photograph ownership through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Surviving photographs show Windsor people in a variety of environments, from formal studio portraits to carefree snapshots of families and organizations around town. *Faces of Windsor* provides a sampling of these images from the Society's photographic collections. Visitors to the exhibition will recognize familiar faces and discover new ones in an exhibition as beautiful and diverse as Windsor itself.

*Faces of Windsor* will be on view in the Society's North Gallery from September 12, 2008 through January 31, 2009. Information about the Society's 2008 exhibitions is available on the Society's website <http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org> or by phone at 860/688-3813.



*Mill workers at Tunxis Street boarding house,  
Poquonock, c. 1890. WHS Collections*

# The Minister's Wife

Susan Smoktunowicz, Volunteer

On June 30, 1892, after a four-year engagement, Miss Harriet Louise Cooke of Worcester, Massachusetts, married the Reverend Roscoe Nelson, newly appointed minister of the First Church Congregational in Windsor. From that time until her death in 1948, she was the Minister's Wife, the Reverend Mrs. Roscoe Nelson. She was that and much more.

Born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, on October 25, 1860, Harriet was the daughter of the Reverend Theodore Cooke and his wife Martha E. Hale. She was the second of six children and their oldest daughter. Difficulties came early to this family when in 1871 Reverend Cooke died from cholera. Martha Cooke took her young family to her parents' farm in Stow, Massachusetts. Their financial situation was difficult, but close family bonds gave them strength.

The importance of family is a fundamental theme throughout Harriet's life. Close family ties, a well disciplined habit of letter writing, and the family's care in preserving these letters have given us a window into the life of Harriet Cooke Nelson that spans almost six decades, 1876 to 1933. Thanks to the generosity of Harriet's grandson, R. Winthrop Nelson, Jr., the Windsor Historical Society has this collection of letters and other documents giving us insight into his grandmother and into a woman's life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Harriet was intelligent and, in spite of strained family finances, was well educated. At 16 she graduated from Newton High School and delivered the class

history essay. Four years later in 1883, she graduated from Wellesley College with a teaching degree. Her letters show her to be well read and to have clear opinions on a variety of subjects. At age 19 she writes her brother Frederick who is attending Williams College, admonishing him to "be a good boy" and "don't be a lawyer." A few years later she exchanges



*Harriet Louise Cooke, Wellesley College, 1883.*  
WHS Collections

thoughts with her sister Carrie on homeopathic medicine and the ills associated with wearing a corset. She wouldn't wear one! She expresses opinions on doctors, Democrats, parishioners, a turkey shortage at Thanksgiving, and in the years immediately preceding the First World War, on extreme pacifism.

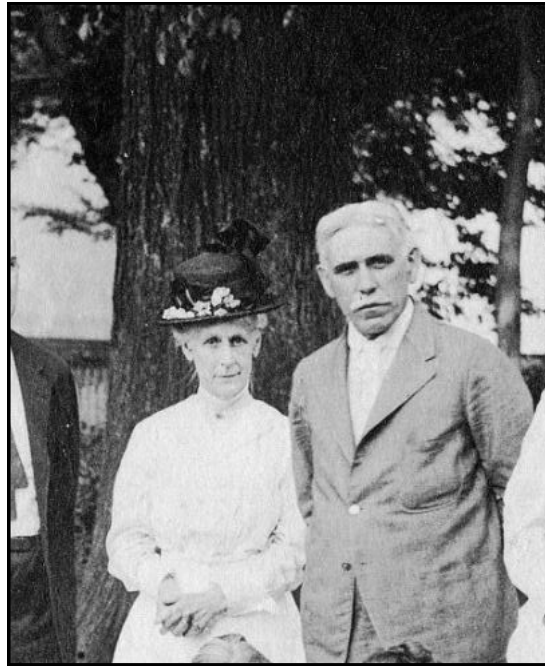
The importance of education was another theme in Harriet's life. She and Roscoe were both teachers when they met. They put their life together on hold for four years so that Roscoe could attend Yale Seminary and become a

minister. Later, their sons Frederic and Winthrop would work their way through university by tutoring. They received their degrees from Harvard with both parents providing advice, encouragement, and, of course, financial aid. Education was a family affair.

Prior to her marriage Harriet was a career woman. She taught at Worcester High School and at Putnam (Connecticut) High School, where she was also assistant principal. During a period of nine years, she supported herself and sent money home to her mother and siblings. How excited she was to receive an offer of \$1,000 teaching salary! After her marriage Harriet continued to work although in an unpaid

capacity. She was very involved in the First Church in Windsor, teaching and overseeing Sunday School, speaking at meetings, attending to the needs of parishioners, and helping her husband prepare his sermons.

Like many of her time, Harriet lived through epidemics and the effects of illness and accident on herself, her family, and the church community. She writes of cholera, typhoid, and influenza; her sister Sadie's tuberculosis; and of too many funerals in her first year at First Church. Harriet's experiences were also similar to our own today. There were falls on ice and stairs, the children's measles, stress and sleeplessness brought on by doing too much, and depression caused by the drowning death of her third child Theodore.



*Harriet and Roscoe Nelson, c. 1915.  
Photo by William S. Leek. WHS Collections*

But life wasn't all gloom and doom. She tells of sailing on the waters off Maine's Southwest Harbor, trips to Europe, receiving a new sewing machine, and selling corn grown in her Windsor garden. She writes of the daily activities of life, buying clothes, canning mincemeat, and overcoming an infestation of buffalo bugs!

Harriet Louise Cooke Nelson was a daughter, sister, wife, mother, teacher, and friend. Her wit, intelligence, caring, and human frailty are evident in her letters to family. Visit the Windsor Historical Society

library to read these letters and get to know this remarkable woman.

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Director's Report (Continued from page 2)

offers more photographs and explanations of how our town has evolved in the past century. Windsor gardens will be the focus on Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, when the Windsor Garden Club and the Society join forces to offer the public a tour through ten gorgeous local gardens.

The month of September is chock full of historical activity all around town. Those of you planning to make a visit from some distance may want to make your travel plans now. The Society will be offering a series of four genealogy classes on Wednesday evenings with Descendants of Founders of Ancient Windsor historian Ed Strickland. The Town 375<sup>th</sup> committee will open a display of rarely-seen historic documents at Town Hall the first weekend in September. The DAR will offer a special quilt display and programming at the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead during the second weekend in September. We will open our third and last photographic show, *The Faces*

*of Windsor*, on September 12<sup>th</sup> followed by an "Antiques Road Show"-type appraisal day with local experts on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The Town 375<sup>th</sup> committee is close to unveiling a special concert happening that evening. Stay tuned!

The momentum continues on September 20<sup>th</sup> with Northwest Park's Country Fair and a Four Centuries Costume Ball. Annual meetings of the Windsor Historical Society and the Descendants of Founders of Ancient Windsor are planned for the last week of September, and the celebrations will be capped off with a town parade and fireworks display on the September 27<sup>th</sup>. More information about all of these events is available at <http://windsor375.com> and <http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org>. Town celebrations like these are important because they make us realize that we as individuals are part of a larger social fabric. Windsor is our town after all - worthy of our celebration, preservation, and care.

## Museum Educator News



Julia Baldini, WHS Educator

### Hazel Thrall Sullivan Scholarship Awarded To Sara Hawran!

Congratulations to Sara Hawran who was recently awarded the Society's \$500 Hazel Thrall Sullivan Scholarship. Sara is a stellar student at Windsor High School. She belongs to the Spanish Honor Society, National Honor Society, and plays first clarinet in Windsor High School marching band and symphonic band. Sara also volunteers at Grace Church, South Park Inn, Windsor Food Bank, Northwest Park, and in the library at the Windsor Historical Society. When asked to write an essay on what it is like to live in Connecticut's oldest English settlement, Sara wrote,

*"To live in a place where so much was accomplished, it is only right that I try to accomplish all that I can, because that is the example Windsor has set for me."*



Hazel Thrall Sullivan was a descendent of the Thrall family that settled in Windsor in 1635. She served as a legislator in the Connecticut General Assembly from 1944 - 1948 and as a Social Studies teacher at L.P. Wilson Junior High and Windsor High School from 1959 - 1980. This scholarship fund was established in her memory by her son Antony Sullivan to encourage the study of Windsor history by high school students.

## Visions of Windsor Summer Camp

Are you looking for a hands-on learning experience in a fun, fast paced environment for your kids this summer? Children in grades 3 - 8 are encouraged to sign up for the Society's *Visions of Windsor Summer Camp* to be held August 11 - 15th from 8:30 - 4:30pm. Using the Windsor Historical Society's *Four Centuries of Windsor* and the new *Windsor Then and Now: A Photo History 1890 - 2008* exhibitions as a starting point, children will go out into the community to discover Windsor today. Some areas of interest will be the Palisado Green, Palisado Cemetery, Town Hall, Huntington House, Loomis Chaffee School, river trail and various statues, monuments and sculptures. Children will learn photography and photo editing skills, canvas painting, and creative writing skills. The week will culminate with a group produced exhibition that will travel around Windsor in 2009. Sign up today!

The cost for the summer camp is \$125 per child. A limited number of spaces are available so advanced reservations and a \$25 non-refundable deposit is required. Applications can be picked up at the Windsor Historical Society or printed off our website at <http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org>. Application and the balance of camp fees are due by August 1. For more information, please contact Educator Julia Baldini at [jbaldini@windsorhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:jbaldini@windsorhistoricalsociety.org) or 860/688-3813.

### Congratulations to Windsor Students at Connecticut History Day!

On May 3, students from all over Connecticut participated in the State-wide competition for National History Day at the Connecticut Historical Society. Working individually or in small groups, these students in grades 6 - 12 must utilize primary and secondary resources to create an exhibit, documentary, performance, paper, or website. Congratulations to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place Windsor winners Robert Kirschner, Tery Vinh, Kathryn Zeugner, Jamie Wakefield, Kaelyn Moore, Kim-An Do, Brittany Holliday, and Abrianna Tasillo. First and second place winners compete with over 2,000 students nationally in June at the University of Maryland. Good luck!

## *Windsor: Then & Now* Scavenger Hunt

Think you know a few things about Windsor's history? OK! Got your detective hat on? Good! Because Friday, August 1, and Saturday, August 2, mark the first days to start racing for the "Windsor Then and Now Scavenger Hunt." Pick up your booklet at the Windsor Historical Society between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on August 1 or 2. Booklets will include clues and historic images that will leave you guessing and searching for over 20 spots around Windsor. Teams will have a few weeks to complete the booklet. At each spot the team members are required to collect a stamp, sticker, or take a photograph with their team to be placed in the book. Books are due back to the Society no later than August 22 at 4 p.m., but teams are encouraged to hand in the book as soon as completed. The first teams to successfully hand in a completed book with the correct answers will have the opportunity to ride on the Society's float at the September 27<sup>th</sup> Town Parade. In addition to the book, other helpful hints are located within the *Windsor Then and Now: A Photo History, 1890 - 2008* exhibition located at the Windsor Historical Society. Both young and young at heart will have a blast discovering Windsor's fascinating history. Do you think you know the answers? Put your Windsor history to the test!

## Volunteers

Our thanks to the following volunteers for their help:

**Educators:** Jay Davenport, Carolyn Doyle, Heather Renaud, Dorothy Simon, Bob Stisser. **Front desk / administrative:** Bill Allen, Marsha Anderson, Betsey Blaisdell, Barbara Byczkiewicz, Doris Butler, May Checho, Elaine Colli, Carolyn Doyle, Anne Drake, Shirley Grossman, Betty Halberstadt, Bill Harris, Ruth Kirschner, Josephine Mitchell, Jane Morris, Elizabeth Parker, Margaret Quigley, Mary Ransom, Evelyn and Marion Singer, Jim Trocchi, Nancy Von Hollen, Priscilla Wabrek, Vivian Webster, Helene Westenberg, Connie Whigham. **Grounds:** Windsor Civitans (Bill Newport, Randy Lee, Walt Stefanow, John Pier). **Library/collections:** Elaine Brophy, Bev Garvan, Sara Hawran, Sandy McGraw, Susan Smoktunowicz. **Special Events:** Bill Allen, Marsha Anderson, Betsey Blaisdell, Abbey Blough, Elaine Brophy, Anne Drake, Bev Garvan, Mary Giffin, Elaine Hargrove, Bill Harris, Dee Jubrey, Ada Martin, Jim Martin, Josephine Mitchell, Janice Provost, Mary Ransom, Ron Renaud, Laura Toal, Jim Trocchi, Ellie Word.

## The Power of a Photograph

Barbara Goodwin, Librarian



*The assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, was a shock to the nation and the world. This memorial to JFK was set up on Broad Street Green in Windsor. The community gathered around it for a memorial service and to sign a book of condolences. Photo courtesy of Julius Rusavage, WHS Collections*

Oliver Wendell Holmes is said to have called photography "the mirror with a memory." Whether recording our families, our community, or events in the wider world, photographs provide a powerful visual link with the past. Many images maintain their freshness over time and transport us back even decades to a moment in time that was intensely meaningful or fleetingly poignant.

The Windsor Historical Society is always looking for original photographs that document the story of Windsor and its people. All photographs must be identifiably Windsor images and a listing of the individuals appearing in the picture is appreciated. For information about the donation process, please contact the Society's Librarian, Barbara Goodwin, or the Curator, Erin Stevic, at 860-688-3813 or email us at [collections@windsorhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:collections@windsorhistoricalsociety.org).

# Upcoming Events at Windsor Historical Society

Unless noted otherwise, all events are held at the Society. Go to <http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org> for more programs or call 860/688-3813 to have a list mailed to you.

**Tuesday, June 3**

**7 p.m. - 9 p.m.**

*VISIONS OF WINDSOR PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST*

Local photographers will present Power Point presentations of Windsor-specific photos suitable for family audiences. Audience votes for winners. COST: \$6/adults; \$5/seniors and students; \$4/WHS members.

**Saturday, June 14**

**1 p.m. - 4 p.m.**

**BUS TOUR:** Tour Windsor's highways from the old Poquonock factory sites to Loomis Chaffee School with historian Beverly Garvan. COST: \$12/adults; \$11/seniors and students; \$10/WHS members. **Reservations required** by June 13.

**Saturday, July 12**

**10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**FOUR CENTURIES GARDEN TOUR:** Eleven talented Windsor gardeners will open a potpourri of different types of gardens to the public. COST: \$10 in advance; \$15 day-of-tour. Call the Society (860/688-3813) for tickets.

**August 1 - August 22**

*WINDSOR: THEN & NOW SCAVENGER HUNT*

Test your Windsor knowledge by participating in this scavenger hunt! Books can be picked up at the Society starting Friday, August 1, or Saturday, August 2, and must be completed no later than August 22. Winners will be selected to ride on the Society's float in the September 27 town parade. For more

information, please visit <http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org>.

**August 11-15**

**8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**SUMMER CAMP:** Children in grades 3 - 6 will explore Windsor's history and become junior curators by creating a traveling exhibition that will be displayed around town in 2009. Children will learn photography and photo editing, canvas painting and creative writing skills as they work together to create and select images and objects to produce their exhibition. COST: \$125. **Reservations required** by August 1.

**September 3, 10, 17 and 24**

**7 p.m. - 9 p.m.**

**LECTURE:** *Making Family Memories, Exploring Family History series.* Genealogist Edwin W. Strickland will show how artifacts and the census, birth, marriage, and death records help build family trees. Internet resources and software programs covered. **Reservations required** by September 2. COST: \$50/series or \$15/session.

**Friday, September 12**

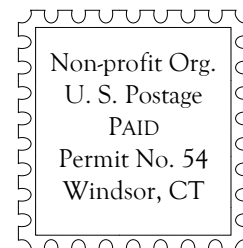
**5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

**EXHIBITION OPENING:** *The Faces of Windsor, 1850 to the Present.* Photographs of Windsor people of all ages, classes, and backgrounds relate the larger history of Connecticut's First Town. COST: Free.



**Windsor  
Historical Society**

96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, Connecticut 06095



**Saturday, June 14, is Connecticut Open House Day.**

**See our exhibitions and historic homes at no charge!**