

The Wintonbury Drummer



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

May 2011

Next meeting: June 1, 2011 Potluck Supper 6:00 p.m. *Annual Meeting with Election of Officers*

Location: Sacred Heart Church, Father Picher Room, 26 Wintonbury Ave., Bloomfield, CT

Program: Take a virtual tour of Arlington National Cemetery.

Presenter: Carolyn Ivanoff

Past Perambulations: Secret Skating Pond.....50 years ago.

While walking my dog on Cadwell Road through the Laurel Park neighborhood in January, the years seemed to fall away. The well-kept, comfortable homes with were no longer there. They had been completely replaced by a dense woods as far as the eye could see. The paved street became a narrow dirt road that continued on over the hill to Filley Street.

The woods, (that were in fact a very large apple orchard and beautiful in Spring and Summer,) went on as far as you could see on both sides of the road and as many times as my friends and I “explored” it we never quite found where it began and ended and never knew who it belonged to.

Along the “road” there were a few decent sized ponds, (swamps, actually) but those of us who knew about them referred to them as ponds, being around 9 or 10 years old at the time.

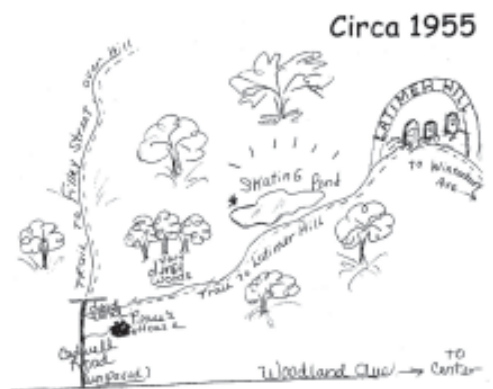
In the winter ice skating was the most important thing in our lives. Every afternoon after school a couple of us would bundle up and trek into the woods to check and see if the ice was safe to skate on.

My favorite was one off the right side of the road following a narrow trail through the woods.

There, about 1/4 mile or so up the trail was a lovely secluded pond and because it was fairly small and obviously not deep it was the perfect place to skate. It was always frozen solid or so it seemed at the time!

It was quiet and wonderful!.....only a few yards from Latimer Hill Cemetery. I spent many afternoons with my brother, a boy or girl from the neighborhood, or just skating alone until nearly dark. It was a magical place and I think of it whenever I am out walking in that general area in winter.....trying to place exactly where the path used to be but seeing only backyards, dormant gardens and the huge change in the landscape of my childhood.

Pat Campbell Robair



NOTE: You are invited to fill this space! I'd like to see your memories, clippings, or excerpts from your reading. Hand them to me or send by fax, mail or email to rpierce@hartford.edu and I'll edit them for the newsletter. There may be a limit of about 300 words.

Society Directory

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Vacancy

2013

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Frederick Hesketh

CURATOR

Fannie Gabriel

HISTORY CENTER CURATORS

Ralph & Louise Schmoll

From the Curator's Corner

Gems from our files: >>A clipping from October 29, 1949 tells of the Norclaire development on Woodford Road. Fifty-two homes will be built for a cost of \$8,490 each, including a refrigerator, gas range, and washing machine. >>Another clipping from the Bloomfield section of the *West Hartford News* for January 5, 1956 says, "Last February, 1955, Robert Spencer Capen and Alice Goodwin Capen observed their 50th wedding anniversary. In attendance was their daughter Dorothy Capen Nelson [our Dorothy Capen]." >>An April 27, 1948 clipping relates the presentation of a play written by Bloomfield author Anna Ferraresso and staged at Avery Memorial, Hartford. It was a three-act play entitled "Deserter at Dawn." Our society has a good many of Anna's plays stored in archival boxes. >>The August 1939 *Travelers Record* tells of J. G. Batterson and an 1879 program by which his company was responsible for Civil War memorials throughout the nation. This was a separate business from his insurance venture. One statue, on Charter Oak Avenue in Hartford, was a prototype of one placed at Antietam.

A Word of Appreciation

• THANKS to the thirty-five volunteers who made possible our April 30 tag sale/bake sale/flea market. Vender fees and sales of donations brought in almost \$1,000!

Fannie Gabriel (f.gabriel@att.net)

Murders in Bloomfield

At Prosser Library - June 7 at 7:00 pm

The commission of a murder is highly detrimental to the good order within society. One would think, "Surely such events have never occurred in peaceful Bloomfield!" Unfortunately, a review of historical data indicates that such events have occurred in Bloomfield and have/or have involved Bloomfield citizens. Wintonbury Historical Society Historian, Fred Hesketh, will describe the results of his research into such events in Bloomfield over the town's 176 year history. Registration is appreciated, 860-243-9721.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

Send your check to the Society, P.O. Box 5474, Bloomfield, CT 06002

- \$15. Individual
- \$25. Family
- \$40. Supporting
- \$150. Life

NEW EXHIBIT TO OPEN IN JUNE

An exhibit on Wintonbury/Bloomfield Industries Pre-1800s to 1900s will open on Sunday, June 12, 2:00 to 4:00 PM, at the Bloomfield History Center, 153 School Street. Admission is free. Industries featured will include saw mills, grist mills, kilns, brick works, B a r t o n bells, bear traps, guns, g r a i n c r a d l e , pitch (tar) making, b a r r e l making, Bidwell Blade, tin ware, drums, and hat making. Where possible actual items will be exhibited. For more information, call 860-242-1016.



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860-243-1531

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Our Publications

Wintonbury to Bloomfield (\$16.50), Images: Old Bloomfield (\$20., or to a member \$18.); History of the Bloomfield Catholic Church (\$15); **NEW** Bloomfield & the Civil War (\$12); **NEW** Not Lost ... Gone Before: A History of Latimer Hill Cemetery (on CD \$25); Barnard Genealogy (\$10.); Good Old Days (\$10.); Cook Book (\$7.); Over Tunxis Trails (\$5.); Bicentennial Activities (\$3); Note Paper (8 pk - \$3.); Filley House T shirts (\$12.); Brown Drums and Brown family (\$10.).

Board of Directors Highlights

At a special meeting on April 27, the Board of Directors heard from the House Committee about building and grounds needs. Our exterior air conditioning unit, which was damaged last October when a tree fell on it, will have to be replaced at a cost of about \$2,600. Neither the town's nor the property owner's insurance carriers would cover the cost. Two other needs were tabled until the Board's scheduled meeting on May 18. It was voted to change propane suppliers at a cost of about \$600, which includes moving the tank to a safer location and an annual tank rental fee. Finally, the House Committee was authorized to hire an electrician to install new lighting and outlets upstairs, replace the chandelier with a fan and add track lighting downstairs, and repair one of the parking lot lights, for a cost of \$1,000.

The financial report showed year-to-date receipts of \$13,810 and expenditures of \$9,690 as of May 16. Total assets exceed \$68,000, of which \$47,000 is restricted as part of either endowment or the Hoff Fund (for building use).

Committee reports showed activity in the Nominating, Program, Collections, Fund Raising, and Old Farms School Committees. Minutes will be available upon request.

JUNE PROGRAM TO FEATURE CAROLYN IVANOFF

“Take a virtual tour of Arlington National Cemetery.” View the history of our nation set in stone as we tour the most prestigious burial place in the world. Meet the men and women who rest in Arlington who gave their lives so this nation would live.

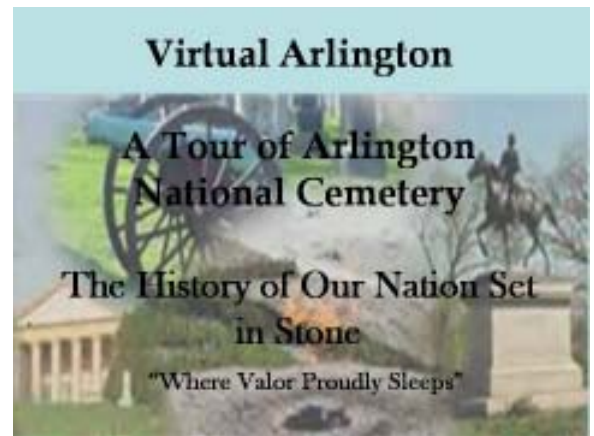
On Wednesday, June 1, Carolyn Ivanoff will present her program on Virtual Arlington: A Tour of Arlington National Cemetery. Sponsored by the Wintonbury Historical Society, the program will start at 7:00 PM following the Society's six o'clock potluck supper at Sacred Heart Church's Father Picher Room, 26 Wintonbury Avenue, Bloomfield.

Carolyn Ivanoff is an assistant principal at Shelton Intermediate School in Shelton Connecticut. She has over twenty years of experience in a variety of educational settings in public schools: teacher, administrator, departmental chair, teacher leader, adult educator and software trainer.

In 2003, Carolyn was named Preservationist Teacher of the Year by the Civil War Preservation Trust. Carolyn develops, authors, and presents a variety of historical programs for various organizations and serves as a resource for local history initiatives. She is committed to bringing history and social studies educational programs beyond the classroom and into the community. Proud of her continued involvement and membership in Civil War Preservation Trust, Carolyn calls CWPT “the finest historical preservation organization in our nation.”

Carolyn says, “I loved history from the very beginning and it's a great part of my daily life and will be forever. I can honestly say like Thomas Jefferson that I cannot live without my books. Some of the first words my father taught me were “Emancipation Proclamation Lincoln freed the slaves.” It amused him when he would get me to say that to people as a toddler—they were always astonished. It wasn't too long before I wanted to really understand what those words meant. Growing up in Shelton, CT, I was always fascinated with the woods and the Native Americans before us. We had one of the greatest amateur archeologists in the Northeast in our town. His name was Mr. Dorso and he always did programs for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in his basement. His collection was awesome and all from local digs he had done.”

See more about Carolyn at her website, <https://sites.google.com/site/carolynivanoff/>. For more information



Calendar of Events

2011

Jun 1	WHS Annual Meeting with election of Officers & Pot Luck Supper (Sacred Heart Church) Presenter: Carolyn Ivanoff on the Arlington National Cemetery
June 7	Prosser Library - Murders in Bloomfield, Presented by Historian Fred Hesketh
Jun 12	New Exhibit: Wintonbury/Bloomfield Industries Pre-1800s to 1900
Jul 27	CT Genealogy 101 – The Beginning Presented by Jean Perreault's
Sept 7	WHS Regular Meeting
Nov 2	WHS Regular Meeting

President's Letter

I hope you saw Frank Harris's column in the *Hartford Courant* on March 17 of this year. Harris is chairman of the Journalism Department at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven and a regular contributor to the *Courant's* op-ed page. In March the occasion of his column was the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. In this connection he says, "It ain't history if it ain't remembered." Because a course in U. S. History is required for graduation from Connecticut high schools, our young people are exposed to historical facts and figures. But, says Harris, "the oral tradition—one person talking to another, parents talking to children, grandparents talking to children, teachers talking to their students about their thoughts, feelings, memories, experiences—has faded." The personal connection, the certainty that real people populated history, has grown dim. What, he asks, do we really know about history? He quotes from a recent sermon in which his pastor talked "about the absence of history in the souls and psyche of those who shoot one another without care or consideration." Isn't something missing there? Isn't there an absence of history or an absence of memory? "The past is never [as] perfect as the present sometimes makes it seem," says Harris. "Yet, there are things to be gained from knowing the past without getting stuck in nostalgic remembrances. Whether it is how differences are settled or any one of a number of other things, the lack of knowledge of what transpired in the past before we were a whisper of a thought in the womb is important stuff. Not knowing the past is seldom good."

This is what our Historical Society is all about. Beyond our yellowed clippings, our dusty artifacts, our shelves of documents, are the lives of real people. They lived, they learned, they have much to tell us. We, too, have memories, have histories, have hard-earned lessons, that we can and should pass on to posterity. Thank you for helping to make sure history is remembered.

Dick Pierce

Leaving A Legacy

The Wintonbury Historical Society is a charitable and non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historical sites of Bloomfield, and the memory of the ones who created them.

The Society is in dire need of funds or gifts in order to continue the restorations, and preservations in progress. We are therefore, soliciting the commitment of citizens who value the history of Bloomfield now and in the years ahead.

Listed are a few ways to leave a legacy:

1. Set aside a gift in your will to the Society
2. Name the Society as beneficiary of an insurance policy.
3. Remember your loved ones with a gift in their honor.
4. Name the Society as a beneficiary of your IRA or 401K.

There are several other means, just talk with your financial advisor.

Financial Development Committee