

The Wintonbury Drummer



Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

November 2000

Next Meeting : Wednesday, November 1, 2000,

Methodist Church, School St. & Wintonbury Ave., 7:30 p.m.

Program: Slide show and talk by Ed Stanley based on his research: "The Traprock Houses of Bloomfield, Granby and Simsbury" – a look at the other stone houses built within a few years of the Capt. Oliver Filley House – a fascinating story!

President's Message:

The pride of the Wintonbury Historical Society could not have been higher at the Bloomfield Drum Festival, October 7, 2000 because the biggest event in town not only honored the historic Brown Drums of Bloomfield, but also the Brown Drum and Fife Corps played six original Brown drums made in 1812. More about our participation in this newsletter. The real draw to the WHS table was Marc Sitkin's remarkable display that featured the Capt. Oliver Filley House and photos of Louis Filley, Oliver's grandson, and his wife, Charlotte Barnard Filley. It brought us new members and volunteers – Our thanks, Marc.

We were also pleased to see that the most recent Connecticut Historical Society mailing acknowledged Judi Sitkin's Historic Bicycle Tours - From Wintonbury to Bloomfield.

The Society's program on November 1st should be a special treat!

Fannie Gabriel, President

Welcome, New Members!

Alvin Taylor

John Morris

David Hatheway

H. Richard McLane

Jean Flick Brown

Hilda Brown/Douby

Karen J. Sprout

Lucy Wirsul

Seth and Beverly Harris

Dr. & Mrs. James Rosen

We are honored to have you with us!

Jean Buscarello,

Membership Chairwoman

Filley House Restoration Fund

The Society is deeply indebted to the many donors who have stepped forward to support the restoration and preservation of the Captain Oliver Filley House. In five short months \$45,037.85 has been raised -- \$37,087.85 in donations, \$ 6400 pledged for the year 2001, and \$1500 in matching grants. We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of those who share our vision for a cultural center in Bloomfield. If you have not yet participated in this fundraising effort and wish to do so, we welcome your help as the campaign continues. Whether you give \$5, \$50, \$500 \$1000 or more, your support can make a difference. Donations may be mailed to: The Wintonbury Historical Society, Filley House Restoration Fund, P.O. Box 7454, Bloomfield, CT 06002.

Jeanne M. Hunciker

Drum Festival

Sales were brisk at the Society's booth during the Drum Festival on October 7 as Brown drums echoed in the distance. Sales of our publications, T-shirts, mugs, and notepaper netted \$566.50. Marc Sitkin's dramatic panels highlighting the Filley House evoked interest and praise, prompting five people to volunteer their services for the restoration project. Heartfelt thanks to all who helped during the day; your assistance was greatly appreciated.

Jeanne M. Hunciker

BOOKS AND MUGS AVAILABLE

From Wintonbury to Bloomfield — “Bloomfield Sketches, a collection of papers on the history of the Town of Bloomfield, Connecticut, formerly known as Wintonbury, compiled by members of the Wintonbury Historical Society,” published in 1983 with Paul W. Coons. Contact Fannie Gabriel, 242-1016 to purchase a copy.

Beautiful Bloomfield mugs are available, featuring the Filley House, the Old Farms School, and the Drummer Boy Statue for \$10.00. Call Jeanne Hunciker at 242 -6329 to purchase, or see her at the November meeting.

The Wintonbury Drummer, the Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society of Bloomfield, welcomes all submissions of announcements, historical articles, photographs, events, articles, quotations, poetry, or ? You may e-mail Sharon Steinberg, Editor, at cd000910@mindspring.com, or contact her at 286-1066, or mail it to her at 12 Regency Drive, #7, Bloomfield, CT 06002; you may also send your submission to Fannie Gabriel, 400 Seabury Drive, #5158, Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002.

Thank you! Thank you!

Dresses!

A sincere “thank you” to Cynthia Barnard and Harriet Burnham for donating three historic dresses: Julia Ann Newberry Filley’s wedding gown, her brown and black striped silk dress, and an unidentified 1890 ivory, two-piece Victorian wedding gown. Julia’s wedding gown – identified with a pinned label undoubtedly by Dorothy Filley Bidwell, Julia’s great granddaughter – is of dark gold, shimmering silk, totally hand-sewn, as is her other silk dress.

The Victorian gown – complete with ivory lace and a built-in train – is stitched partly by hand and partly by machine. All three dresses have been initially evaluated by the curators of the Connecticut Historical Society, and will be prepared for exhibition at a future date. Thank you very much for these wonderful donations!

(See wedding anniversary excerpts from Julia’s diary in this newsletter!)

Dolls!

Another grateful thank you goes to Carol McCrann Proom, daughter of the late, beloved Dr. McCrann, for donating eight lovely, early dolls, one of which belonged to Carol’s mother, Peggy. These dolls have been prepared for exhibition in the spring by Ruth Nelson, a research volunteer at the Connecticut Historical Society -- Thank you, Ruth!

The Elihu Case Diary, a Continuing Saga

By Robert McComb

Case genealogy: Elihu Hiram Case is in the 7th generation of Cases in America and the son of Hezekiah and Cynthia Case. Elihu married Maria Woodward in 1820 when he was 21 and she was 18. They had 5 children, the youngest of whom was 10, when Cynthia died in 1840. Elihu remarried in 1841 to Emiline Evans and to them was born one son, Hezekiah E. By 1853, from which the following entry is taken, Elihu would be 54.

Following a map of Bloomfield for 1869, as you travel west from Bloomfield center on Mountain Avenue, you first pass Brown Street where properties belonging to J Filley and J.H. Filley were located ["J" on the map is Jennett; "J.H". is Jay Humphrey, Capt. Oliver's son; Jay and Julia had moved to Brown Street by 1849]. Then you will pass the site of the Capt. Oliver Filley House and there is a house there listed to S. B. Pinney. [Samuel] As you proceed further down Mountain Avenue and turn right on Duncaster, you arrive at the house of Elihu H. Case.

From his diary:

Thursday, March 16, 1853

Very good day; not too cold. West to Hartford. The best wheeling I ever saw for this time of year. Had good luck, did well. The old man felt his oats well. Bought:

Some cheese	. \$0.40
Some sugar	0.28
Some tea	0.19
Some tea	0.12
Some oil	0.50
Some molasses	0.37
Some chaklet	0.08
Some beef	1.00
Some cotton cloth	1.25
Some cotton cloth	0.20
Some cotton cloth	0.06
Some codfish	0.20
Something for the stomach	0.06

Done chores, done well

See future issues of this Newsletter for more snippets about Mr. Case's life.

HOSPITALITY HELP NEEDED!

The Hospitality Chair is looking for two (2) members to provide refreshments for the following meetings: February, April and/or June. Please call me at 243-2720 or tell me at the November meeting.

Thank you!

Doris L. Jordan, Hospitality Chair

From Julia A. Newberry Filley's Diaries: Some Anniversary Entries

Julia Ann Newberry Filley (1808-1881) was Jay Humphrey Filley's wife and daughter-in-law to Capt. Oliver Filley. Julia and Jay were the first occupants of the Filley House, which was probably built for them in 1834, the date inscribed above the front door. They were married in 1833, and all three of their sons were born in the Filley House. One, Marcus, died at the age of 2-1/2 and is buried near his mother and family in Mountain View Cemetery.

Julia's genealogy stretches back to Oliver Wolcott on her mother's (Sarah Butler of Avon) side. Her father was James Newberry, a prominent Wintonbury resident. Julia was born and grew up in Wintonbury, probably in the house on Filley Street attributed to Joseph Newberry, whose name appears on the house.

Transcribed by Sharon Y. Steinberg, 2000

Saturday, September 25, 1852

It is 19 years to day since I was married – Is it possible? Can it be that I have been 19 years a wife & almost 16 – a mother

Sunday, September 25, 1853

It is 20 years to day since we were married- and I joined my interest with that of another – Much happiness has since been mine – and I have not escaped all the trials of life
Have attended church all day

Monday, September 25, 1854

It is twenty one years to day since Mr. Filley and I linked our destiny together at that time to look forward 21 years would have seemed a great while, but it has passed away like a pleasing dream – mixed with some of the realities of life. The step then taken I have never had recourse to regret

Friday, September 25, 1857

Louis, Alfred, Chapman & Jennett – [*] have all gone to Hartford to see the "firemen's parade" and witness the balloon ascension – The balloon came down about a mile west of us –

It is 24 years to day since we were married – What changes in that time have taken place

Sunday, September 25th, 1859

Twenty six years to day since we were married

Our path has not been a thornless one yet – have we had many blessings by the way and have been a blessing I trust to each other

[] Louis and Alfred are Julia's sons -- Alfred donated much land for Filley Park, and Louis would serve in the Civil War, be a captive at the infamous Andersonville Prison, and marry Charlotte Barnard (whom he affectionately called Lottie) -- Chapman is Samuel Chapman, who married Jennett, Julia's sister-in-law, Jay's sister, and who lives with them on Brown Street at this time in a magnificent Victorian house that burned c. 1955.*

SYS

The Old Farm School — An Excellent Season

We had 168 people come through the school for the year 2000 session. Two weeks ago we had three visitors whose father attend the school, so they found it interesting when they located his grades. From their reaction I assumed that the grades would have been higher! Another good story was a father who explained to his 4-year-old daughter that a Victrola was a pre-CD player.

Many children did not understand the outhouse concept because they thought it was unfair that they had to use the outhouse. They also wanted to know where the gym was for P.E. class. Also, many of the children thought

it unfair that if the parents did not bring in any wood, they sat in the cold corner.

Most people are extremely impressed with the school and most comments indicate that they go by often but never stopped. In fact, one visitor from New York City suggested we contact Antique Road Show to film us the next time they come to Hartford. She plans on coming back herself when we open again for the summer session of 2001 with some friends to see our gem of a building

Do consider being a docent on Sunday afternoons – the summer session is closer than you think! You need no prior experience or knowledge about 18th century life. Contact me, Nancy Murray, Old Farm School Coordinator, at 242-0323.

Vote on Proposed Change to Bylaws at November 1st Meeting

The Bylaws Committee has met and recommended to the Board of Directors for approval a change to Article V, Section 4, to increase from four to six the Standing Committees. The new committees are the Education/Research Committee and the Properties Committee. The vote on these changes will take place at the November 1st Wintonbury Historical Society meeting.



The Old Farm School

Wintonbury Historical Society
P.O. Box 7454
Bloomfield, CT 06002