

THE WINTONBURY DRUMMER



NEWSLETTER OF THE WINTONBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BLOOMFIELD, CONNECTICUT • SEPTEMBER 2026



CONNECTICUT'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR MUSIC

SEPTEMBER 10, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

ALVIN AND BEATRICE WOOD HUMAN SERVICES CENTER

330 Park Avenue, 6:00 P.M. with light refreshments

“What A Glorious Crash They Made” features a collection of “New Songs” and Hymns published in Connecticut during the American Revolution. Richard Franklin Donohue, Tenor & Harpsichordist, will explore this fiery repertoire that, in the words of John Adams, “cultivated the sensations of Freedom.” The program spans the Revolutionary War years with selections like John Dickinson's *Liberty Song*, William Billings' *Chester*, Andrew Law's *Middletown*, and several popular British tunes with "new" texts reflecting the cause of freedom.



Donohue in costume
Website photo

Donohue is a singer, private music instructor, and historian with a music degree from the University of Connecticut. He is the Town Historian of his hometown of Cromwell, Connecticut and has been the President and Program Director of the Cromwell Historical Society for twenty years.

IN THIS ISSUE: Page 2: Board of Directors Highlights. **Pages 3-4:** Bloomfield Celebrates Lemuel Haynes. **Pages 4-5:** Lemuel Leaves a Lesson. **Pages 6-7:** Wintonbury Historical Society at Prosser Library's Prom. **Page 8:** Preview of Year's Programs; What Historians Are Saying.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS

At the June 1 meeting, the Board voted to name Peter Grant as Assistant Treasurer and John Mills as Director. An anonymous donor has underwritten the portrait of Lemuel Haynes being painted by Michael Borders. Upcoming events involving WHS are Prosser Library's grand reopening, Juneteenth activities, and selected Concerts on the Green.

At the July 6 meeting, Louise Schmoll and Diana Barnard said that the BHS Class of 1961 will visit Society buildings as part of its reunion. One alumna will donate old BHS newspapers.

On August 6, the Board heard committee reports and learned that more than three thousand hours of work are estimated to be given by WHS volunteers during the year. The year-end financial report showed \$50,941 in income and \$58,950 in expenditures. The Nominating Committee report and the Budget for 2026-2027 are being finalized and will be sent out to the membership prior to the annual meeting on September 10.

Business members:

D & D Travel; Many Rivers Acupuncture

ATTENTION!!!

The Wintonbury Drummer invites readers to contribute articles, personal reminiscences, book reviews, photographs, etc. Material for publication in the November issue should be received by October 5, 2026. Thank you.

The Wintonbury Drummer

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BLOOMFIELD CELEBRATES LEMUEL HAYNES

by David Roones

On June 27, 2026, about 60 people met at the Bloomfield Congregational Church to honor Rev. Lemuel Haynes, who was born in what is now West Hartford in 1753, to a Black father and a white mother. Lemuel served in the Continental Army in 1775-76. He became the first Black to speak out against slavery in America when he wrote “Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-Keeping”. Tutored in Greek at the Wintonbury Congregational Church, he was licensed to preach there in 1780, and taught school in town to pay for his room and board. Ordained in Granville, MA, in 1785, Lemuel became the first Black ordained to a mainline church in America. In 1804, he became the first Black granted an honorary degree, a Master of Arts from Middlebury College in Vermont. The gala celebrated the past but also highlighted what Blacks are contributing to our town today.



David Roones and Ruthanne Marchetti in period costume
with Haynes portrait by Michael Borders.
Photo by Marilyn Johnston

At the June 27th service, planned by Bloomfield Congregational and the Wintonbury Historical Society, Rev. Shawn Fisher of the host church gave the Welcome and Benediction. Rev. David Roones read a Citation in honor of Rev. Haynes written by the Town Council. Rev. Darrell Goodwin read Lemuel’s “Liberty Further Extended”; Eustace Straker, the organist of the host church, read Lemuel’s licensing sermon; and Rev. Michael Bailey read Rev. Haynes’s sermon “The Nature and Importance of True Republicanism” given in Rutland, VT, on July 4, 1801. Rev. Suzette DeBeatham-Brown gave the Pastoral Prayer, while Rev. Alvan Johnson, Jr, preached on “First Things First” from Matthew 6:33. Ms. Lucy Anne Hurston described Lemuel’s early years, and Michael Border outlined the pastor’s later years. Mr. Borders also explained his portrait of Rev. Haynes, paid for (continued on next page →)

by a gracious \$400 donation from a member of the Bloomfield Congregational Church. Ruthanne Marchetti and Louise Schmoll were ushers.

Besides three hymns played by Mr. Straker, music was provided by African drummers Alvin Carter, Jr., Kendrick Baker, and Curtis Greenidge; and by Anthony Rokosa, Jordan Chery, and Akin Hobson. The two trios were paid by a generous donation of \$800 from Seabury Active Life Plan Community. The host church paid for the bulletins, the organist, secretary, and media team. To view the service, go to “mybloomfieldchurch,” click on the Facebook icon, scroll down to “HONORING REV. LEMUEL HAYNES.”



Musicians, Left to right: Jordan Cherry, Anthony Rokosa, Akin Hobson, and Alvin Carter, Jr. Marilyn Johnston photo

The service was viewed by many on social media, including Bill Paine, a descendant of Rev. Haynes through the pastor’s son, William Babbitt Haynes. Bill and his wife, Liz, visited the new Haynes memorial on the lawn of the Bloomfield Congregational Church on May 26, 2026.

Editorial

LEMUEL LEAVES A LESSON

It was simple and clearcut for Lemuel Haynes. He believed that a divine Being had created humans in order that they might learn to love both God and fellow human beings. This imperative extended to all people of all sorts. Therefore, it followed that people of African and European descent should love one another and live together in peace and brotherhood. And Haynes saw this belief as implicit in the Declaration of Independence.

The roots of the Declaration of Independence were close at hand, said President Calvin Coolidge in his 1926 Sesquicentennial Address. The roots were located not abroad, in the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French thinkers, or English philosopher John Locke, as scholars claimed. Rather, they were located on American shores in the texts, sermons, and writings (continued on next page →)

of colonial clergy. “Whatever else we may say of it,” said Coolidge, giving voice to the nationalist worldview that informed the times, “the Declaration of Independence was profoundly American.” No one who studied the historical record could escape the conclusion that it was the product of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century clerics who preached equality by testifying to human brotherhood, who justified liberty by praising the divine creation of all people. “Even Thomas Jefferson,” said Coolidge, “acknowledged that his ‘best ideas of democracy’ had been secured at church meetings.”¹

Most of those clergy whose teachings spawned the Declaration also called for the abolition of slavery. By the mid-1770s, however, a division had arisen amongst them. One group emphasized the distance between blacks and whites. While they called for an end to the slave trade and slavery, they promoted the expatriation of blacks from America to Africa.² (This view, called the Colonization Movement, reflected the thinking of Thomas Jefferson and many, perhaps most, articulate white Americans of the time.³) Other clergy, however, emphasized the connections between blacks and whites, envisioning a day when both races would be united as equals in America. Lemuel Haynes was a leader in the latter group.

Haynes strongly believed that blacks and whites could—and should—live peacefully together as equals in a democratic nation. He based this on his study of the Bible, which he pursued in Wintonbury Parish. That is also the way he read the Declaration of Independence. In 1776, he wrote:

I would ask, whence is it that an Englishman is so far distinguished from an African in point of natural privileges? Did he receive it in his original constitution? Or by some subsequent grant? Or does he boast of some higher descent that gives him this pre-eminence? For my part I can find no such revelation. It is a lamentable consequence of the Fall⁴, that mankind have an insatiable thirst after superiority one over another: So that however common or prevalent the practice may be, it does not amount, even to a circumstance, that the practice is warrantable.⁵



It is fitting that Bloomfield, a leader in interracial rapport, remembers Lemuel Haynes in this 250th anniversary year. He was on the right side. He still has a lesson to teach our nation today.

--Richard Pierce

References for the editorial on pages 4-5:

1. David McKean and M. Todd Bennett, *The Flag Was Still There: A History of the American Experiment in Five Anniversaries* (2026), page 147.
2. Russell Shorto, *Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom* (2018), page 96.
3. Russell Shorto, *Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom* (2018), pages 77-78.
4. The Fall: The Christian teaching that, after human beings came into existence, there was a period of innocence and peace followed by a rebellion against the Creator that brought on all the troubles that have impacted human history.
5. Lemuel Haynes, "Liberty Further Extended," in *Pastoral and Political Discourses of Lemuel Haynes* (reprinted 2025), page 104.

Wintonbury Historical Society at Prosser Library's Prom

by Ruthanne Marchetti

What good fortune to be invited to have a table at Prosser Library's Prom on the evening of June 24, 2026. The Prom was part of the library's way of celebrating its grand opening this summer.

WHS president David Roones, Louise Schmoll, and I sat by a table covered with interesting historical documents, as well as toys for children and curious adults. The tops were easy to spin, and Jacob's Ladder did not take too many tries for people to enjoy the fun. Though the ball in cup eluded most, a few young participants were encouraged by Louise Schmoll to stay the course and were eventually rewarded.

Khalid Williams, former WHS director, was a huge hit at the event. He provided the most delicious mocktails as well as his reliable smile and good cheer for all. (continued on next page →)



Top: WHS table and panel display
Bottom: Khalid Williams mixing drinks

Mara Whitman, WHS director and Bloomfield librarian, provided some vintage dresses while dressing as one of the Village People! I personally owe her special thanks for using her librarian scissors for kindly cutting me out of the dress Jan so kindly sewed me into!

The panels created by board member Wendy Wolcott to tell the pictorial story of the recent restoration of The Old Farm School were on display as well.

Participants were encouraged to wear prom attire that reflected the many ages, and Wintonbury Historical Society took the invitation at its word. David Roones sported a tri-corner hat and WHS member Janet Baker arrived with her dear family friends, the children dressed in American Colonial clothing made by Jan herself.

I was fortunate enough to wear a Victorian ballgown also sewn by Janet Baker. The gown included a full hoop slip crafted by Janet as well. I must say that the gown was magnificent, and I don't remember ever feeling more elegant, though dealing with a giant hoop skirt took some "getting used to." I thank Janet and Don Baker, who, at WHS programs over the years, have also shown their handmade colonial clothing to Metacomet and Carmen Arace students.

Jan, Don, Wendy, Louise, Sharon, Mara, and David remind us that showing up doesn't just help, it's fun! Thank you all for adding to the success of the evening. And special thanks to Prosser for a wonderful community event!



Top: Louise Schmolz shows a toy
Bottom: Ruthanne Marchetti
models gown by Janet Baker
Photos by Marilyn Johnston

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY?

If you're not a member of the Wintonbury Historical Society, please consider joining. Some members are solely contributors, and others find volunteering for various jobs to be stimulating and enjoyable. Members receive five Drummers a year, can get free scanning of old photographs, and can get free help with genealogy. Just send your contact information and a check for \$30 or more to the treasurer at P. O. Box 7454. You can also join online at www.bloomfieldcthistory.org.

PREVIEW OF YEAR'S PROGRAMS

The following programs are being planned for the forthcoming year.

September 10, 6:00 PM. Annual meeting followed by “What a Glorious Crash They Made: Musick of Connecticut’s Revolution” with Richard Franklin Donohue, Tenor & Harpsichordist (see page 1).

November 5, 6:00 PM. “The Web They Wove,” living history presentation by a five-person ensemble, The Dirty Blue Shirts.

December, TBA. Bloomfield High School Gospel Choir at First Congregational Church.

February, TBA, at Prosser Library: “Professor Jim.” Kevin Johnson of the CT State Library presents James H. Williams (1788-1878), African American who served Trinity College for fifty years.

March 20, 2027, afternoon program, at Prosser Library. “Yours for Humanity: Abby Keller Foster’s Impact on History” with Lynne McKenney Lydick.

April, TBA. Honoring Rabbi Philip Lazowski

May, TBA. “The Burning Question about Nathan Hale” with Walt Woodward, retired State Historian.

WHAT HISTORIANS ARE SAYING

From Susan Dunn. *Jefferson’s Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism* (2004):

“The last thing the Framers [of the Constitution] wanted was a government run by organized, adversarial, ideological parties striving to capture control of the government. (Page 130)

“Indeed, despite the personal rancor arising from political antagonisms, despite the severed friendships, the suspicions, and accusations, despite the potential harm wreaked by the conflict and fanaticism, many Americans had begun to discern something positive, something crucial, in adversarial party politics: citizens energized by issues, participating in self-government, taking their rights and responsibilities seriously, gave life and blood to their political culture.” (Page 131)