

# HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## SEPTEMBER 2020

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## FORMER HARWINTON RESIDENT HAS A CLEAR VIEW OF HER EDUCATION (Information provided by Beatrice Kasznay Garner)

Teachers, administrators, and parents today are being challenged to provide an education for children during a time of uncertainty created by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. There are new protocols, new ways to conduct remote learning experiences, staggered schedules, masks, and government oversight.

When former Harwinton resident Beatrice Kasznay Garner looks back on her days spent in Clearview School (Fourth District's one-room school building on the corner of Whetstone and Swimming Hole roads) she has many pleasant memories. But, like today, it was not without its challenges.

Bea was a student at Clearview in the 1940s. She lived nearby and walked to school with her younger brother, Andrew. Most of their classmates lived on



**Beatrice Kasznay and fellow Clear View student Alan Wilcox are the height of winter school fashion in their knee socks, knickers, winter coats and mittens.**

farms, and all walked to and from school in the morning, for lunch, and when school was dismissed in the afternoon . . . in all kinds of weather. In some of the 11 other school districts in

Harwinton students walked as far as two miles to reach a school building. In cold weather one of the older pupils was paid six cents per day to arrive early to light the wood stove since there was no electricity at the Clearview school until 1942. Water was carried in daily in a tin pail and the children shared one tin dipper. Hands were washed in cold water. Toilet facilities were outside in an outhouse about 100 yards from the school. The day was spent with one teacher in a room with grades 1-8 and often the same teacher taught students year after year.

It was a time when children were evaluated not only on their studies, but also on detailed categories of behavior. A student's academic performance was graded excellent, good, fair, or poor.

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**OFFICERS – 2020-2021**

**President:** Bonnie Andrews  
**Vice President:** Nancy Lyons  
**Secretary:** Elaine Sederquist  
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**DIRECTORS**

**Term Ends 2020**

Michael Orefice  
Everett Lyons

**Term Ends 2021**

Carol Kearns  
David Ryan

**Term Ends 2022**

Bruce Burnett  
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**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

Vacancy

**CURATOR**

Bonnie Andrews  
with assistance from  
Mary English, Corinne Curtis, and  
Susan McClen

**BUILDING SUPERVISOR**

Dennis Andrews

**OTHERS**

**(non-board positions)**

**HISTORIAN**

Roger Plaskett

**AUDITOR**

Marilyn Mitchell

**LEGAL COUNSEL**

Patrick Wall

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harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Harwinton Historical Society

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Harwinton, CT 06791

## Agricultural Society Cancels 2020 Fair

The following information was released on August 19<sup>th</sup> by Dane O. Deleppo, president of the Harwinton Agricultural Society.

“After consulting with local and state officials the Board of Directors of the Harwinton Agricultural Society has decided to cancel the Harwinton Fair for 2020. The board explored every possible option before making this difficult decision. This is only the third time in our fair’s 164-year history that we have cancelled. We feel this is what is best for the safety of our staff, volunteers and most importantly for all our patrons. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2021. Stay safe and stay healthy.”

The fair is a fund-raiser for the Harwinton Historical Society. The added revenue will be absent this year, but mainly missing will be the opportunity to visit with the many people who enjoy a fall weekend of entertainment. The fair is always an opportunity for the historical society to visit old friends and make new ones while promoting Harwinton’s place in history.

The 2020 fair was one of many victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. Canceling venues that draw large numbers of people is an attempt to prevent the spread of the virus that has developed into a world-wide pandemic.

For future information about the fair or to contact the organizers see the Harwinton fair web site [www.harwintonfair.com](http://www.harwintonfair.com). There is also a link to the fair on Facebook.

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### *Historical Society Annual Appeal*

*The Harwinton Historical Society will be launching its Annual Appeal this month. We are hopeful that you, our friends and supporters, will be as generous as you have been in the past as we work to preserve Harwinton’s history for the future.*

*Historical Society Board of Directors*



## Harwinton Consolidated School: A Success Story

Harwinton's Superintendent of Schools submitted a six-page report for the school year of 1948-49 that was published in the 1948 Town Report. "The school year of 1948-49 has been a "red letter" year in the lives of the children in Harwinton. It was the year that they entered their new Consolidated School from the several one and two-room schools scattered throughout town."

- *Charles F. Rich, Jr., Superintendent of Schools*

The merging of the various small school districts was seen to have many advantages. A music teacher was added to the faculty. A school health program was directed by Dr. Maude T. Griswold. A school lunch program was started. Students seeking an education beyond eighth grade were attending high schools in nearby municipalities such as Torrington, Winsted and Terryville.

The following statistics were reported for the first year of consolidation:

- Average daily membership (attendance) of elementary school pupils: 212.10
- Average daily membership of pupils in high school: 67.80
- Average teacher load: 26.51 students
- Average salary paid to teachers: \$2,688 (state average paid to elementary school teachers was \$3,161)
- Per pupil cost of textbooks at the Consolidated School: \$1.53
- There were 184 days scheduled for the 1949-50 school year.
- A progressive kindergarten and additional classrooms were recommended

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"Through the years at Clearview, there were two or three in my grade. When I graduated in 1946, I was the only 8<sup>th</sup> grader."

"I appreciate the opportunity to reflect back 80 years ago to what memories I have of those 8 years at Clearview. Some memories stand out, others are forgotten. At the time, it was the only education I knew, and it wasn't until much later that I found others had different experiences."

- *Beatrice E. Kasznay Garner*

**NOTE:** The information about Clearview School and the start of the Consolidated School was provided to the Historical Society by Bea Garner. She has researched her family history including her ancestors' immigration from Hungary to become prosperous farmers on 120 acres of land on Whetstone Road in Harwinton known as "Orchard Farm".

Her father Andrew J. Kasznay also attended Clearview School. When Beatrice was one year old, her father was elected to the Harwinton School Board where he served for 33 years. Her mother was Sarah Snow Kasznay.

Today, Bea and her husband Clark are residents of Maryland. Her brother Andrew Kasznay Jr. is a resident of Pennsylvania.

## *PROGRAM COMMITTEE JOINS COLLABORATION*

We are excited to be able to offer a wide variety of topics to quench your historical curiosity! At the invitation of popular speaker Hamish Lutris, HHS has joined a collaborative effort to enable us to continue experiencing interesting and informative programs. A round of applause to Hamish for his generosity in offering to enrich our communities with his exceptional programs. Hamish Lutris is an extraordinary resource, and it is an honor to share his vast knowledge and expertise with the community!

The list of offerings is below. Please register with the sponsoring organization who will provide ZOOM protocols. Noble Horizons kicks off the *Autumn 2020 Lutris Collaboration* on Wednesday, September 2 @ 11 a.m. with the first of a four-part series, *Roots of the Constitution*. Derby, Stratford, and Milford Public Libraries are offering multiple programs on a wide variety of topics. To facilitate registering for the online lectures, the list is by organization vs date. Please contact our partners at the contact points below for as many of the programs that interest you!

We miss seeing you and look forward to getting together as soon as Town Hall feels it is safe to reopen. In the interim, we hope that the Hamish Lutris programs satisfy some of your history thirst!

Please take care!

Best,

Harwinton Historical Society Program Committee  
Bruce Burnett, Elaine Sederquist, and Marti Lecko

## Noble Horizons

Noble Horizons Community

11 am start times

Caroline Kenny-Burchfield

[clburchf@hotchkiss.org](mailto:clburchf@hotchkiss.org)

9/2

### **“We Hold These Truths...” The philosophy Behind the Constitution**

The Constitution was not born in a vacuum. The ideas that inspired the formation of our government were echoes of what was also happening in Europe. This presentation outlines the profound thinkers and ideas that went into American constitutional government. Both the philosophies of Europe and the wonders of a new world combined to form a powerful symbol of progress and a better life for all people. Thinkers like Rousseau and Adam Smith will be examined, along with the founding fathers and their significant contributions to governmental thought and practice at this time.

9/14

### **“I Smell A Rat” The Constitutional Convention**

In 1787, it was clear to many that the American government was a failure- unrest, weakness, debt, and a lack of policy combined to render the central government powerless, which was to be mended by the Constitutional Convention. Yet there were many who preferred the US government as it was. This presentation examines the Constitutional Convention, its considerable innovations in popular government, and the opposition to it, which is still surprisingly potent today.

9/21

### **The Guide Which I Shall Never Abandon: The American Presidency**

The office of the presidency is one of the great innovations of the US Constitution. Presidents are the supreme authority of the government, ensuring the laws are executed, and that American interests worldwide are safeguarded. Yet this position was one born of hasty compromise and conflicting ideas as to what a national leader should be. This presentation deals with the office that has symbolized the United States for more than 200 years.

9/28

### **The Weakest Branch: The Supreme Court**

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One of the greatest achievements of the US governing vision was the creation of an independent judiciary. But the Supreme Court did not emerge fully formed from the Constitution. Its powers and structure were carved out over years through the actions of the first presidents and justices, finally attaining its powerful role in the early 1800s, under the great Chief Justice, John Marshall. This presentation will examine the early history of the Supreme Court, its fight for equal power in governing the country, and some of the decisions that have proven groundbreaking in the history of the country and of jurisprudence in general.

### Stratford

Stratford Public Library

2 pm start times

Charles Lautier

[falcon1565@gmail.com](mailto:falcon1565@gmail.com)

9/13

#### **Men to Match my Mountains: Mountain Men and the Opening of the West**

Beginning in 1803, Americans explored the west, looking for freedom, space, and money. They found all three, often in deadly quantities. This talk will center on the first people to explore the Rocky Mountains, seeking out the fur-bearing wealth of the wilderness. It will talk about the mountains themselves, the hold they had on the imaginations of America, and the fate of many of the 'mountain men' who blazed the trails that made today's highways.

10/18

#### **“The one immediate vital need of the entire Republic”**

The transcontinental railroad was considered the greatest engineering, financial feat in the world at the time of its completion. Yet thousands of bodies marked its route, hundreds went bankrupt on the railroads, and many decried their power and influence. This talk will discuss the history of the railroad, from its beginnings in the 1820s in the US to May 10, 1869, when the transcontinental railroad was finished. The talk will also explore the vast power and influence that railroads exerted over the United States, altering the country's customs and making us a nation of travelers.

11/8

#### **Hell on Wheels: The Wild West**

From the 1850s until the 1890s, the West was a dangerous place, one that took a high human toll before it was 'civilized' in the 1880s and 90s. This talk will focus on three aspects of that danger: cattle, which drew cowboys and big business out west; Indians, who contested that expansion doggedly; and the railroad, which served to draw the nation together and subjugate Native Americans. Each contributed to the reality and mythology of the West and remain powerful images today.

11/22

#### **Sodbusters and Colleges: The Winning of the West**

In 1860, most of the western plains were uninhabited by Americans; the 1890 census revealed that the frontier, where US law did not hold sway, had disappeared. Civilization had come to the entire West in only 40 years. How? This talk will focus on the immigration, technologies, and political actions that made possible the taming of the vast land that we call the West.

### Milford

Milford Public Library

7 pm start times

Nancy Abbey

[nabbey@milfordct.gov](mailto:nabbey@milfordct.gov)

203.783.3307

9/16

#### **Partus Sequitur Ventrum: The History of Slavery in America**

The practice of slavery in the United States began in 1619, when 20 Africans were sold in Virginia. The economic potential of the New World encouraged the international trade in human beings, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the United States was becoming richer than any nation ever seen on Earth, largely based on the wealth generated by slavery and its attendant industries, like textiles, insurance, and commerce. Shedding the country of the moral taint associated with this practice would require a civil war to achieve, and the after-effects of African slavery still haunt the nation today. This talk will discuss the beginnings of slavery in the country and its role in the US's expansion in wealth and power through the early 1800s, but ultimately bringing on the Civil War in 1861.

10/14

#### **“An American Dilemma:” African America after Freedom, 1865-present**

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Though freed in name in 1865, African Americans have seen severe limitations on the progress they have made in their path to full equality in the United States. This talk will examine the rocky road that has been traveled by African Americans and the nation as a whole as a result of slavery and its after-effects. The Jim Crow South, the various currents of black activism, and the events and personalities that have made the civil rights struggle one that, while taking place in the United States, has taken on world-wide significance.

11/18

### **“Men should think twice before making widowhood women's only path to power.” Feminism in Western History**

Feminism is often thought to be a modern phenomenon, starting in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and growing in strength through the 1900s. But feminism has been a powerful current of American social activism since the inception of the country. This talk will center on the position of women throughout western history, the roots of feminism in the United States, and the progress made through the end of the 1900s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

12/9

### **“No Human Is an Alien to Me” Immigration in US History**

Immigration is one of the fundamental processes of American history. It has played a major role in making the country what it is, providing generation after generation seeking a better life, the “American Dream,” however that has been defined by millions of immigrants and their descendants. However, resistance to that pattern has also marked the American experience. This presentation places immigration in a historical setting and explores the attitudes and political acts that have shaped our country’s approach to immigration, and the ways we have both encouraged and objected to it.

## Derby

Derby Public Library

6:30 pm start times

Nicole Cignoli

[ncignoli@biblio.org](mailto:ncignoli@biblio.org)

9/13

### **Why Did We Need The Constitution?**

By 1787, the US government, which had been conceived in a spirit of extreme economic and social liberty, was failing. States were arguing with each other, money was scarce, and banks seemed to be favoring wealthy east-coast economic elites, while oppressing those struggling to expand the country’s borders on the western frontier. With Shays’ Rebellion in the winter of 1786-87, the fragility of the government finally gave way to a general cry for some solution to the problem. This presentation details the background of the Constitution, as well as discussing the document itself, which has served the country for over 200 years, despite being written quickly and in secret.

10/26

### **“Men should think twice before making widowhood women's only path to power.”**

#### **Feminism in Western History**

Feminism is often thought to be a modern phenomenon, starting in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and growing in strength through the 1900s. But feminism has been a powerful current of American social activism since the inception of the country. This talk will center on the position of women throughout western history, the roots of feminism in the United States, and the progress made through the end of the 1900s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Hamish Lutris is an Associate Professor of History, Political Science, and Geography at Capital Community College in the greater Hartford area and Professor in the History department at Housatonic Community College.