

HELP PRESERVE

WINDHAM'S HISTORY

Please consider helping in any way you can. Tear off this coupon and send it to:

Windham Historical Society
PO Box 105, Willimantic, CT 06226

or make a donation online by visiting:
Windhamhistoricalsociety.org

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Sign me up at the following level:

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Contact me about:

- Board Membership

- Donating an historical item
- Volunteering
- Remembering the Historical Society in my will
- An idea for an exhibit



2020 WINTER - NEWSLETTER



The Jillion House was built in 1825 from hand shaped granite blocks quarried from the bed of the Willimantic River, for William Jillion, a founder of the town's textile industry. Located at 627 Main Street, this architectural landmark is now a museum of local history overseen by the Windham Historical Society.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Horrocks, Chairman

Susan Coburn Drew Creamer Ernest Eldridge

**Gary Fetzer Jean Lambert Allen Riquier
Joanne Sailor Anita Sebestyen Peter Ziska**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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[facebook.com/windhamhistoricalsocietyCT](https://www.facebook.com/windhamhistoricalsocietyCT)

<https://windhamhistoricalsociety.org>

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

JOANNE SAILOR

Joanne is an Instructional Assistant in the Arts at the Capitol Theater Performing Arts Magnet High School in Willimantic.



Previously, she has held positions in the education, insurance and journalism fields including time spent as a news reporter

for The Hartford Courant, The New Haven Register and United Press International. A longtime resident of Northeastern Connecticut, she lives in Willimantic with her husband, James.

ANDREW (DREW) CREAMER

Drew was brought up in West Hartford. His grandmother Margaret Gates



Creamer, returned to their farm in Connecticut when her husband died, and was followed by Drew's mother and father. After

working in Hartford, he has spent most of his life in Michigan. Drew has a

General Studies/ Industrial Relations degree from Oakland University, and a Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies from Detroit's Wayne State University.

SUSAN (FETZER) COBURN



Sue grew up in Mansfield Center, and is a Professor Emeritus in nursing from the University of New Hampshire. She has lived over 30 years in Henneker, New Hampshire with her husband and high school

sweetheart John Coburn. There, she volunteers at the Henniker Historical Society, where she is involved as a curator, answering genealogical queries and

program development. She has also lectured on “Genealogical Research at Your Local Cemetery.”

WE WELCOME YOU!

Other recent additions to the Board include Allen Riquier and Peter Ziska. We will provide more information on them in our next newsletter. We are always looking for those who want to get involved, either on the Board or as a volunteer. You do not have to currently live in Windham, as meetings are currently being held virtually. Just have a love of history and want to get involved. Email us!

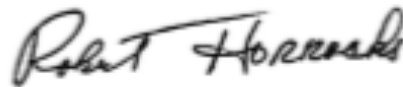
Dear Friends:

We are fortunate to be living among a wonderful array of historians and story tellers, who revel in sharing our past, and can reflect on how our communities developed. We find them at all three of our three local museums. For example, it is truly fascinating to listen to Jamie Eves discuss the development of the textile industry, follow Bev York on a cemetery tour, or relive the sinking of the Titanic through tales and memorabilia provided by Ernie Eldridge and Anita Sebestyen. In addition, we have authors such as Bill Powers and Peter Ziska who regularly relate stories in The Chronicle that transport the reader back to a time when a large part of our town was farm-land, and more than 50 trains stopped in Willimantic each day.

Over the last few months we have been busy. We have strengthened our Board of Directors, and organized The Jillson House’s collections. We also hired a part time consultant to help us

transform our web site into one that is both meaningful and dated, help us plan for our future, and secure the funds to make our facility handicapped accessible.

Our goal is to preserve all of the stories, memories and items of our past, and make them accessible, either at The Jillson House or online. We have a lot of work in front of us – but 2021 is going to be an exciting year. If you like history, please consider joining us as a volunteer or Board Member.



PAST EVENTS

TITANIC stories and memorabilia were on exhibit. There was also chinaware from the movie Titanic, and period clothing.

SHABOO INN came to life again thanks to David Foster. A reception featured memorabilia and pictures of many of the famous acts that appeared at the nightclub.

CONNECTICUT WILDCATS, founded in Willimantic in the 70’s, were once called “America’s best professional soccer team.” An exhibit by Owner and Coach Paul Ingram featured photos, and memorabilia.

QUILTS dating from 1888-1988 were on display. Visitors viewed the collection, and talked to a local antique expert about their own quilts to help determine age and value.

SANTA and Mrs. Claus visited the Jillson and welcomed the town’s youngsters.

TEDDY BEARS brought in by their owners, were guests for tea on fine china. There was

also a Steiff Teddy Bear exhibit, and visitors were able to get their teddy valued, and it’s age determined by an antiques’ expert.

DONATIONS

If you have an item from Windham’s past, consider donating it to the Windham Historical Society. We will be proud to display it and give it the notoriety it deserves. We recently received a State Senate Clerk chair used by Andrew F. Gates. His father, the Honorable William F. Gates, a State House Rep/Senator representing Windham (1877-1897), paved the way for son Andrew’s dedication to his community and civic minded affairs, by getting him a job helping the legislature. Andrew was a a graduate of Yale Law School,



and Clerk for the Senate in 1895. He later became a prominent attorney, crafting the State’s early workers comp law, much of it from this very chair. Thanks to Drew Creamer for the donation.

COAST GUARD

HELPED

In 1896, Charles C. Moulthrop was deemed a hero, when he rescued 4 crewmen on the Commodore Perry, a Coast Guard cutter. Soon after, he died attempting to untangle a icy rigging in a storm off Alaska. The Coast Guard is planning on naming a vessel after Moulthrop, and would like to invite a relative to help launch the ship. But little is known about his early years. What is known is that Sarah Davis, wife of John Moulthrop, and lived with her parents in Windham during the Civil War, claimed to be his mother. That is why the Coast Guard contacted the Windham Historical Society - for genealogical help. The task was given to Susan Coburn. Her research found that while Sarah had written the Coast Guard requesting her son’s personal effects and back pay, she also had a secret. The headstone in Alaska of Charles provides no evidence that he was either born, or lived in Windham. Nor does any census report show him living with Sarah and her other four children. Was Sarah his real mother – or was he the son of John and another woman? Why did he join the Coast Guard? While the search continues, luckily Sue was able to find other relatives of John Moulthrop to help christen the ship.

MEMBERSHIP

Family: Free admission to all events for you and your family; prominent name recognition on website and collateral materials; free historical luncheon; free access to historical documents; invitations to annual events; input at Board meetings; email list inclusion.

Benefactor: Free admission to events; free access to historical documents (as available); discounted historical luncheon; discounted invitations to yearly events; email list inclusion.

Patron: Discounted admission to events; free access to historical documents; historical luncheon invitation; email list inclusion.

Supporter: Discounted admission to all events for you; free access to historical documents; inclusion on email list.

Friend: Free access to historical documents; inclusion on email list.