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WATERTOWN
HISTORY MUSEUM

The Westbury

Preserving the History of Watertown and Oakville since 1945

We are closed until further notice. Based on guidelines provided by the Governor's Office, we are hoping to be open by appointment only beginning September 1. Look for more details on our website and facebook page.

We appreciate your continuing support and hope to welcome you into our new home again soon.

President's Message

WOW what a spring we have all had with Covid -19 but good things continue to happen at the museum!!!

Although we had to shut the museum to the public, we have been busy. We have taken this opportunity to sort through and catalog the collection but there is still SOOO much to do! As you can imagine while we were closed with everything in storage, we were unable to get any of these things done. Now that we have a home and The Good to Great Grant to use towards the exhibit spaces of our new museum, we need to figure out just what we are going to showcase from our extensive collection of artifacts.

Through this process, we have discovered that we need more storage. Thanks to a Woodward Foundation Grant, we have purchased a structure for our backyard that will look just like our house. This structure measures 12' x 20' and should give us just what we need. Although the space will be used as a storage space as we organize and unwind the

artifacts, we do look forward to its future use as a space for holding talks, special exhibits, etc. (More information about this new building is in the [Grants](#) section of this Newsletter.)

At our first meeting with the state regarding the Good to Great Grant, we were able to learn just what we need to do during the next 2 years in order to create this new museum. We have lots of ideas but realize that one of the things that we are going to need is LOTS of volunteers. It is very important to me, and the board, that the community joins in the creation of the museum, it is telling our story. (See [here](#) for more about how you can help by serving on a committee and for other volunteer opportunities.)

We are so pleased with the receipt of grants we have applied for. With these funds, we have been able to pay off our construction loan for all the projects that we did last summer as well as prepare for the coming year. We hope also to climate control parts of the attic for safe storage of our extensive textile collection.

Please keep an eye out for the new Watertown Town Hall's opening. We were invited to put together a display which will show the history of the Watertown Town Halls over the ages. When you go to the open house or pay your taxes stop by and look at your history.

Also, within this newsletter are a couple of easy ways for give to the museum: Stop & Shop give-back bags and the Amazon smile program. While you are shopping you can be helping us!!!

Our website is also getting a facelift!!! Check it out and make it one of your favorites so that you can check it to see what we have up and coming.

Enjoy the rest of your summer,
Linda Merriman, President



School Days!

As we await the final decisions of what the 2020/2021 school year will look like for our community's children, we think of how different their educational experiences have been and may continue to be. We can take this opportunity to see how school and the way our town educated was very different in 1853, 167 years ago!

The Nova Scotia School House, an offsite display building of the Watertown History Museum, is located behind the Munson House in Munson Park. It was originally at the corner of Fern Hill Road and Route 6 (the present location of the Schoolhouse Mobil). This building represents one of the nine schoolhouses in Watertown/Oakville at that time.

Children attended the school closest to their homes within a two-mile radius and would walk to their daily lessons. The typical school day was from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and they attended school for 270 days a year. (Children now have 181 school days.) The school year was broken in to Fall, Winter, and Summer terms. Typically, children began their education at the age of 6. Older children were tasked with helping the younger with their lessons. The students sat by age, the youngest in the front, the oldest to the back of the classroom. The teacher would stand on a raised platform at the front of the class to help monitor all students.

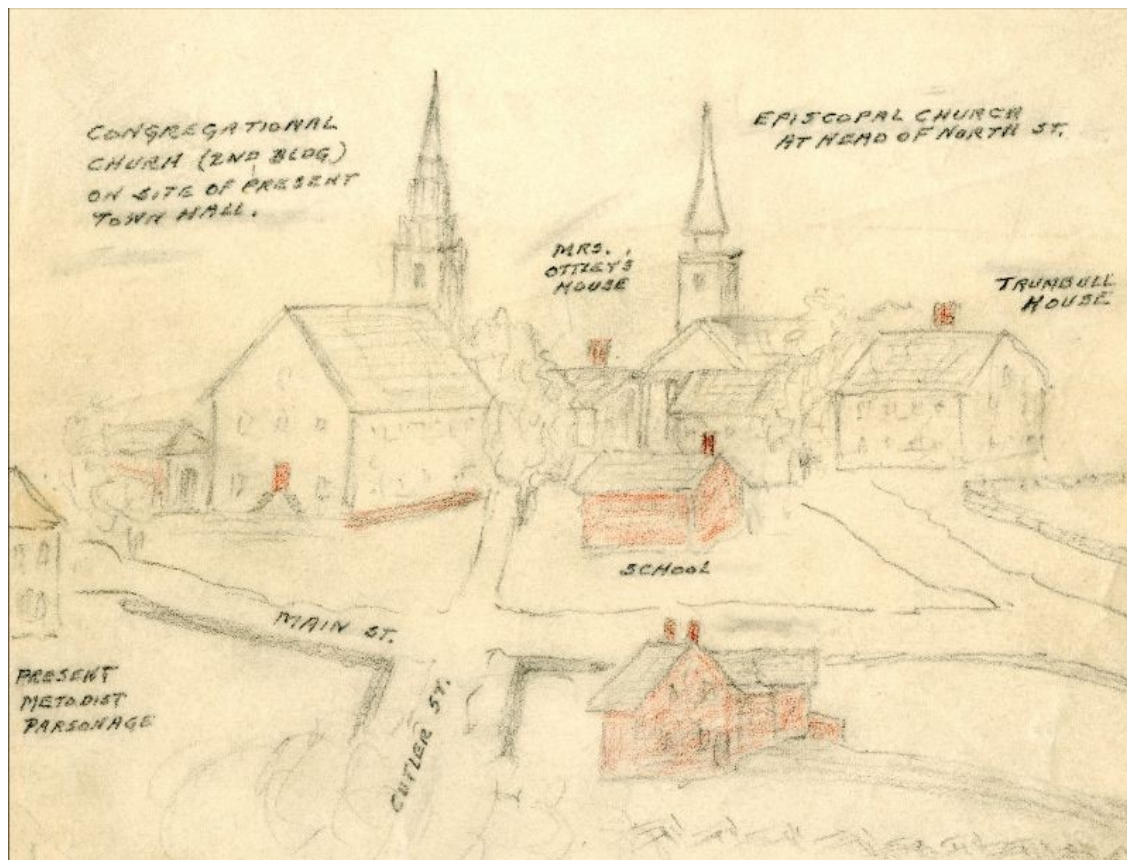
The schoolteacher, typically female, earned an average of \$30/month. This was \$5 more than the average wage in 1850. The community provided firewood to warm the children during their winter lessons. Older male students were tasked with starting the fire in the morning and maintaining it throughout the school day.

Students used a slate to do their class work. The traditional chalk board was not introduced into a classroom until 1913. Paper was very expensive, and a luxury at the time. The slates allowed for repeated use throughout the class day.

Schools were typically built with two entrances, one for male and the other for female students. Baldwin School was constructed with two entrances as well when it was completed in 1907.

Records indicate the Nova Scotia community educated their children in this schoolhouse until 1929. There were 19 students enrolled at that time who transferred to Baldwin School to continue their education.

Kendra Hoyt Scapeccia, Board Member



Which Town Hall?

Opening Soon

Did you know that our new Town Hall is Watertown's fourth since the town was incorporated in 1780? A new exhibit explores these locations and their many uses: from elections to town meetings, dance recitals, High School graduations, theater productions and more! You won't want to miss the ballot box used by Women in 1920 and a Justice of the Peace Ballot Box dated Oct. 4, 1886.

We invite you to view this exhibit in person on the second floor of the new Town Hall [i.e. the former Heminway Park School] or online at [Which Town Hall?](#)

We thank Watertown Town Clerk's office for their support of this exhibit.

What in the WaterOak?

During the recent school closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Swift Middle School 8th grade American History students participated in what their teachers called, "*Where in the WaterOak Wednesdays*". A weekly picture guessing activity included viewing and guessing what and where different photos of Watertown had been taken. One week included an activity of guessing what and how a collection of artifacts connected to Watertown would have been used.

With the help of Watertown History Museum curator, Diane Ciba, Swift Middle School Social Studies teacher Rich Peronace created a presentation of images of 5 artifacts from the Watertown History Museum's vast collection of Watertown history. The students had an opportunity to view the images and guess what they thought the object was and how it might have been used here in Watertown. Can you guess what these are?



A video made with Ms. Ciba giving an explanation of the artifacts was the culminating activity for the Swift Middle School 8th grade American History students. To learn more

about these objects, a link to the video is available [here](#).

The teachers and students of Swift are always looking to connect the history of our nation that they study to the local history of Watertown - this activity was a perfect example of that connection that they want their students to understand and to help them appreciate the rich history of their own community.

Rich Peronace

Swift Middle School 8th Grade History Teacher

[For the full article describing this collaborative activity, check out our website:

What in the WaterOak?]

Grant Corner

Eversource

The coronavirus has delayed the opening of our "Stories in Stone" exhibit. We continue to prepare for a special event highlighting the Old Burying Ground and other monuments and buildings in Watertown. Thanks to the grant we received from [Eversource](#) earlier this year, our display will include interactive maps and links to online resources.

Woodward Foundation

We celebrate with the Woodward Foundation as we retire a construction loan that we acquired in the purchase of our new home at 401 Main Street. The monthly payments were a source of stress on our finances, and we can now move forward with confidence in our new building.

We are also pleased to announce an addition to our property thanks to the generosity of the Foundation. A colonial style storage shed will be installed at 401 Main Street by Stoltzfus Structures of Pennsylvania this fall. The new building will be 12 feet wide by 20 feet long, pre-wired for 110 volts and be climate controlled. In this new space, we will be able to store items and exhibit some of our larger artifacts.

Ivan Cyr, Vice President

CARES Act Humanities Relief

The Watertown History Museum was one of fifty-six (56) organizations from across the state recently awarded a grant from [Connecticut Humanities \(CTH\)](#). A total of \$415,000 in operating support grants were provided through the [CARES Act Humanities Relief Grants](#), made possible with funding provided by the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These funds were designated to preserve jobs and help support organizations negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Good to Great

We are moving forward with the Good to Great Project which will create a professional exhibit about the history of Watertown and Oakville at the Watertown History Museum thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the State of Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development. We need many volunteers to make this exhibit happen. Some ways you can get involved include sharing your ideas about what topics should be covered in the exhibit; researching the history of Watertown people, places, and events; helping to develop the design of the exhibit; writing exhibit text and labels; carpentry and fabricating display fixtures; installing exhibit components; and with technology to create interactive content for the exhibit. We're also interested in hearing what artifacts, photographs, and documents you might have for us to include in the exhibit. If you have something related to the history of Watertown and Oakville you'd like us to consider for the exhibit or if you're interested in getting involved in the project please call the museum: 860-274-1050 or email goodtogreat@watertownhistorymuseum.org.

Stephen Bartkus, Board Member
Good To Great Project Manager

Volunteer Spotlight

Before March 15, we had many new volunteers arriving at the Museum to help organize our Library, document the textile collection, helping with data entry and collection management. These volunteers deserve special recognition for going above and beyond!

- Thanks to Rich Szlama for bringing light to our attic spaces. We are so grateful that he volunteered his time and talent as an electrician to the Museum.
- Thanks to Marlene Warren, a former Newtown Savings Bank 1st Vice President, for her organizational and computer skills. She also volunteered to be our Membership Chair, so you will see her name on emails and letters. If you'd like to be in touch, her email is: members@watertownhistorymuseum.org.

- Thanks to Chelsea Marti, who is helping renovate and rejuvenate our website. A Watertown native, Chelsea also worked at the New Britain Museum of Art, and has created and maintains several web spaces. Her email is:
webmaster@watertownhistorymuseum.org.

Volunteer Opportunities

We need many hands to accomplish our goals. The top priority at this point is forming committees to help us accomplish the Good to Great Grant. You can choose your hours, choose your focus, even choose to sit or stand.... [just kidding]... If you have an hour or more, once a week, once a month, or once a year, we can use your help. For complete information on the variety of options available, see our website:

[How You Can Help!](#)

Membership Update

Thank you if you are one of the 129 individuals and families that have recently renewed your membership. Your membership is more important than ever as we face the challenges of social distancing. We hope we can count on your support during this difficult time.

If you haven't had a chance to send in your form, we invite you to go to our website to sign up now:

<https://www.watertownhistorymuseum.org/membership/>

More Ways to Show your Support



For the month of August, each time a \$2.50 reusable Community Bag is purchased at the Stop & Shop located at 763 Straits Turnpike in Watertown, \$1 will be donated to the Museum. See [here](#) for complete details about this program.

If you shop on Amazon, use the Amazon Smile program to select the Watertown Historical Society, Inc. as your designated charity. One-half



percent (0.5%) of your purchase will be forwarded to our organization. Use this [link](#) to get started. Help us spread the word!

Donors and Business Partners

As thanks for their support, we hope you will shop at these local businesses.

Agnew Florist	Mangia with Gigi & Mike
Allyn's Cleaner	Mark's Garder Center
Ami Marshall	Millette's Pest Control
Anthony's Pizza	Michael Lawrence
Barbara Getsinger	Michaela Kusaila
Barbers & Company	Nancy Byrnes
Bethlehem Winery	Nejaime's Liguor
Black Market Kitchen	Nonna Lucia's Restaurant
Buddha Bistro	Oakville Pizza
Cakes & Sweets by Emanuela	Onyx
Choppers Barber Shop	Ordinary Joes
Daveluy's	Papparazzi
Diane's	Pasta Heaven
Essential Healing Arts, Natural Wellness	Pasta Gallery
Evergreen Cemetery	Quiet Zone
Fascia's Chocolate	Raymond's Jewelry
G's Burger/Carvel	Rebers Plumbing
Gayle's Farm Shoppe	Ro's Pizza
Hair on Main	Rock Garden
Hartford Yard Goats	Roma Ristorante
Hawk Ridge Winery	Sakura Japanese Steakhouse
Health Complex	Starbucks
Highgate Liquors	Sunset Grille
Hosking Nursery	Sweet Pea Florist
Jimmy's of Watertown	Tony's Seafood
Liquor Superstore	Town & Country Liquor
Liza Zambero	Uncommon Grille
	Watertown Golf Course
	Watertown Meat Center



Watertown History Channel

presents

"The Old Leather Man"

We hope you enjoyed this YouTube [video](#) about
"The Old Leather Man."

[Additional information](#) about this iconic figure is also on our
website.



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