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WATERTOWN  
HISTORY MUSEUM

# The Westbury

*Preserving the History of Watertown and Oakville since 1945*

We are open to the public every Wednesday & Saturday  
10am - 2pm  
401 Main Street, Watertown CT  
Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

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

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***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

***From the Watertown History Museum Family to Your Family***

## President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

My vision for 2022 is to continue refurbishing and making improvements to the museum with the first being the installation of a handicap ramp which will create easier accessibility for our valued members and visitors.

Second, to ready areas for future exhibits, we will be painting, upgrading lighting, and creating storage areas for the museum's artifacts. Also, our beautiful stained-glass windows will be restored to stop the disintegration and bring them back to their ageless beauty. In addition, the museum's grounds

behind the annex need to be cleared out with the future possibility of added storage for non-archival items.

With the support of my fellow newly elected board members, and our non-board member volunteers, 2022 will be successful as we work together to accomplish the mission of preserving Watertown/Oakville history and to display these stories in an educational and interesting way.

Wishing everyone a 2022 that is filled with health and happiness.

Ivan Cyr  
President

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## **Curator's Corner**

### **New Year, New Exhibits!**

#### **(and some new spaces for some old friends)**

When we moved to 401 Main Street, we realized that this lovely building was the former home of the Klimpke family. It was built in 1897 for Mary Julia Heminway (daughter of Buell Heminway and Julia (Havens) Heminway) when she married Taft tutor, Paul Klimpke. The family lived here for over 40 years.

This fall, we were so excited to hear from a Klimpke descendant, Julia Miner, and began conversations about the home and family. The result is that furniture owned by Paul & Julia Klimpke will be finding its way back into our Museum, thanks to the generosity of the Miner family and their relatives. This year we are opening a new exhibit "Mary Julia's Parlor" to honor the Klimpke/Heminway families and tell their story using those donated pieces, including a settee and some family photos through the years. Currently this space is decorated for the holidays and will remain that way through January. We'd like to thank our newest Board member, Roger J. Spinelli, of RJS Event Designs for generously donating the decorations, allowing our Museum to be full of holiday cheer!



We also recently completed two projects to create new storage spaces for our cherished collection in our climate controlled, archive safe, attic. The first was a storage space for large framed works, such as photographs and paintings. The second project created a large space to house our extensive textile collection.

With these spaces completed, in 2022 we will be moving our old friends into their new homes! None of these projects would be possible without the help of

our volunteers. If you would like to help with this large moving project, please fill out the survey in the Volunteer section below.

Happy New Year...and feel free to stop by and say hello during our open hours!

Diane Ciba

Curator

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## New Year, New Hobby?

Was your New Years Resolution to start a new hobby or activity? Well, the Watertown History Museum can help with that! Start your New Years Resolution off right by becoming a museum volunteer. You can give us an hour a month, or multiple hours a day...whatever fits your schedule.

Want to help out but don't know where you'd fit? We need help on all sorts of different projects, so no matter what your skills or interest level, we will definitely have a place for you. Check out the list below to see the different roles you can take on:

**Being a Docent:** This position is great for a people person! You will be giving tours and teaching visitors about Watertown's great history.

**Handyman Projects:** Great for someone who likes working with their hands. Our resident handyman, and current Board President, Ivan is always looking for an assistant or two to help build/put together whatever the museum needs!

**Researching:** Not great with people but you know where all of the good history is found? Then our research team is for you! These volunteers help to answers questions via mail or email to those asking for help with research projects of their own, utilizing our vast collections and archives. You will also help to gain knowledge about all the pieces coming into our collection and help to write object labels to be used in exhibits.

**Collections Photography/Archive Scanning:** Professional and amateur photographers alike will enjoy this role. To help keep track of our massive collection, we need pictures of all the objects. This also will involve scanning

documents, photos, and other archival materials so that the museum can create visual records of its pieces.

**Data Entry:** Great for a detail-oriented person! The Watertown History Museum just switched over to a cloud-based collections software, and we need volunteers to help us keep that information clean and accurate. You will be inputting data related to the objects in our collection, as well as making sure that data is easily accessible for future use.

These are not all of what we offer. As the museum's needs change and as we adapt to the changes from Covid-19, we will add or subtract different roles and responsibilities. So if you have a skill that isn't on this list but would still like to see where you fit in, give us a call or shoot us an email at [volunteers@watertownhistorymuseum.org](mailto:volunteers@watertownhistorymuseum.org). Or if you would like, please fill out this [survey](#) and our team will contact you!

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## Membership Update

To our 21-22 Members...Thank you! Your membership ensures that the story of who we are and where we come from will be preserved and shared with our community.

Why is the history of Watertown and Oakville important? History helps us understand ourselves and the world around us. It shows us how the various parts of our community - individuals, families, businesses, government, and even our town as a whole - worked in the past to help us understand the way things are now.

Your membership means our volunteers can continue preserving the heritage and history of Watertown and Oakville, and help us sustain the financial health of the Museum.

With our members' help, the Museum is able to:

- Safeguard donated items and the stories about each artifact,
- Ensure that each and every object is catalogued in a special museum database and properly protected from damaging elements with the latest archival techniques,
- Create and display exhibits that showcase our towns' history and its role

in shaping our state and country,

- Offer research services pertaining to Watertown and Oakville to assist members with all manner of genealogical and scholarly research projects.

If you're reading this newsletter and are not yet a member, please consider supporting the Museum by joining today. The membership year runs from 6/1/2021 to 5/31/2022, and levels range from \$15 for a Senior all the way up to Corporate Sponsors at \$2,000. An annual membership includes newsletters, 10% discount in the gift shop, free research pertaining to Watertown and Oakville, and free/reduced admission to programs/events. As an added bonus, Heminway Circle, Skilton Circle, Lifetime and Corporate memberships are eligible for one of the following gifts:

- *What This Old Hand Knows* by nationally recognized poet-essayist, Alma Roberts Giordan
- *Images of America - Watertown* by historian, Florence T. Crowell
- *1920s Community Cookbook* - A Facsimile of the 1920's Cookbook

You can easily find more membership information at our website:

[www.watertownhistorymuseum.org/membership](http://www.watertownhistorymuseum.org/membership).

And, because we're a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your membership is tax deductible.

Hope to see you at the Museum soon!

Marlene Warren, Membership Chair

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## More Ways to Show your Support



Save your LaBonne's receipts and place them in a ziplock bag. Drop them off in the mailbox at the Museum (401 Main Street). Through their "Cash for Charities" programs, LaBonne's donates to the Watertown History Museum based on the total of the receipts we submit. Thank them by your continued purchases at our local markets.

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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!

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## Winter Programs!

While most museums are cancelling their programming due to the uptick in Covid cases, the Watertown History Museum will be going full steam ahead (ok maybe only half steam as our Programs team figures out how to allow everyone to have a lot of fun, while still being safe.)

To start the year off right we will be hosting our first "Wednesday Winter Workshop" via Zoom! This Zoom will be hosted on **Wed. January 26th** at **6:30pm**.

Our brilliant and historically minded Curator, Diane Ciba, will teach participants where to find online resources and how to evaluate them to get just the historical information you need! Are you looking for more info on the house you live in, or maybe you want to delve deeper into your family's history? This workshop is for you!

This event is **FREE** for **Watertown History Museum Members**. For the General Public, the cost is \$5. Reservations can be made on the Watertown History Museum's website.

If you have any questions about this program, please feel free to email our Programs Coordinator, Chelsea Marti, at [programs@watertownhistorymuseum.org](mailto:programs@watertownhistorymuseum.org), or give us a call at (860) 274-1050.



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