



The Southington Phoenix



Southington Historical Society

The first weekly newspaper in Southington was named... "The Phoenix." The name later was changed to the Southington News located at the corner of Eden Avenue and Main Street.

This newsletter will be published quarterly & mailed to our members and town officials.

Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated. LAJ

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Our First of Many Editions

BY LISA A JANSSON, PRESIDENT

Welcome everyone to our new Southington Phoenix quarterly newsletter!

As president of our organization, I feel a sense of responsibility to Southington and its history. As we move forward I must ask each and every current member to assist in our projected growth. Let's each try to bring in new members and spread the word that we will be doing some new things with new ideas, new people and a renewed pledge of dedication.

This will be a very busy year for the Society.

We are currently implementing a plan that will allow us to create a new exhibit room to include permanent sports and politics displays that will be accessible by everyone. We have, through the tireless efforts of Fern Wildman-Schrier and committee, been approved for a grant to restore the original 1902 windows on the building. The restoration should begin this spring!

We will be implementing climate control solutions for our upstairs storage area, replacing some of our storage and display cabinets and will be properly storing and displaying our artifacts and archives.

We have been holding regular monthly member meetings, a new Spring /Summer program is rolling out and starting this March we will be open to the public every Thursday 1-4pm and Saturday 10am-1pm!

Thank you for your support of the Southington Historical Society. We cannot discover, preserve, promote and celebrate the history of our community without your help.

A L A D Y S P E A K S ... W H O A M I ?

I AM LADY SOUTHINGTON. I AM YOUR HISTORY BECAUSE I WAS THERE AT THE BEGINNING WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING UNTIL SAMUEL WOODRUFF FOUND HIS WAY TO WHERE I WAS. I WATCHED THE ROADS BEING FORMED AND SMILED WHEN MY NAME BECAME ONE.

I AM YOUR HISTORY BECAUSE YOU CAPTURED TIME AND TIME STOPS FOR NO GENERATION. I AM WHAT YOU MADE YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND I SHED TEARS ONLY WHEN YOU DID. I AM LADY SOUTHINGTON WHO WATCHES OVER OUR TOWN, BUT YOU ARE WHOM I CHERISH.

WITHOUT YOU, WHO WOULD REMEMBER ME? WITHOUT YOU, WHO WOULD PRESERVE WHAT I HAVE SEEN OVER THE PAST 230 YEARS?

I AM YOUR KEEPER OF TRADITION 'CAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE ROAD BECOME ROADS, TREES BECOME HOMES AND A VILLAGE BECOME A TOWNSHIP. I COVET YOUR HISTORY BECAUSE I AM YOUR HISTORY.

I AM LADY SOUTHINGTON AND I AM A PROUD LADY. FOR WITHOUT YOU, I DO NOT EXIST. I DO NOT GROW. IT IS YOUR DUTY TO RETAIN MY IMAGE 'CAUSE IT IS YOUR IMAGE.

THE HISTORY OF OUR TOWN SHALL CEASE WHEN NO ONE REMEMBERS WHO I AM AND WHO YOU ARE.

I AM LADY SOUTHINGTON AND YOU ARE THE KEEPER OF MY TREASURES.

AHS

“Pigweed Park”

By Ken DiMauro

When local businessman James F. Pratt, head of the Village Improvement Society, decided to spearhead an effort in the 1870s to clean up what was referred to as “Pigweed Park,” which was little more than a centralized garbage dump, he created the Town Green that residents know and appreciate today.

As the U.S. centennial approached in 1876, Pratt and other businessmen took steps to clean up the refuse, put in sidewalks and plant some trees. The town also began to raise money to erect a monument in honor of the soldiers who fought in the War Between the States.

By 1880 or so, donations to place the monument were successfully realized and “The Silent Sentinel” or “Soldiers’ Monument” became a focal point on the green.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the town green became a place where people could relax, hear band concerts, listen to speeches and witness celebrations and parades.

Eventually, a gazebo was erected at the northern end of the green. Early photographs show celebrations and somber commemorations such as Armistice Day (which later became Veterans Day) and Decoration Day (which became Memorial Day).

Philanthropist Emma Bradley Yeomans Newell, who was the daughter of Amon and Sylvia Bradley, provided the funding for several key monuments on the green, including a drinking fountain erected in 1918 to remember her father and an ornate trough that originally was meant at the time to quench the thirst of horses, mules, donkeys and oxen. This larger trough -- which for many years was positioned at the southern portion of the green -- was dedicated to her late husband, “Edward Yeomans, a friend of animals.” A smaller version was located in Plantsville center near Buckland Street before being moved to the more-recent Plantsville green across from Maple Street. The larger monument was moved to Recreation Park as the Southington green was made smaller over the years. Today, it has returned to Southington center on a small plot of land adjacent to the First Congregational Church.

In 1919, the officials and employees of Peck, Stow and Wilcox Co. erected a flagpole and monument that honored residents who fought in various wars, including World War II. For many years, an “honor roll” that was made of wood and glass honored those who served in various conflicts, including World War II. As that gradually deteriorated, it was replaced in the 1960s by large granite slabs affixed with bronze plaques to honor those armed forces members who served and fought in wars such as WW II, Korean War and Vietnam.

Two war-related relics, a World War I-era large gun and a Civil War cannon that once were on the Town Green are gone today, turned over by patriotic officials for scrap drives during World War II. Also gone are the umbrella-like huge elm trees that were planted right after the green opened in the 1870s and later fell victim in the 1950s and ‘60s to Dutch elm disease.

At one time, the green was much, much larger than it is today. Adjacent roads were paved, wider sidewalks were added and the traffic pattern near this prime piece of land changed drastically.

Columbus Avenue, a new road to honor Italian-Americans, opened in 1960. Later on, the green was squared off at its southern portion.

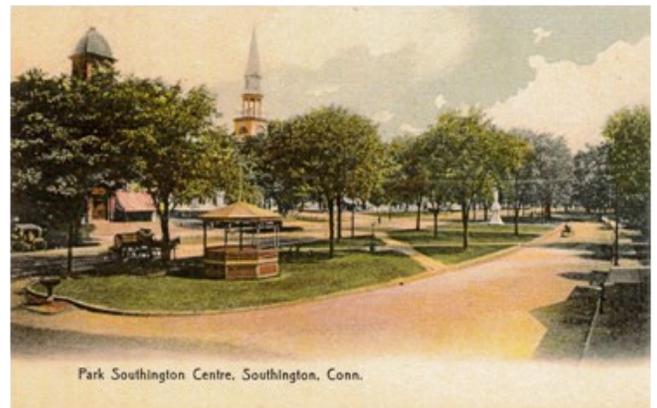
Two items on the green commemorate Southington’s bicentennial in 1979.

The first is an old-fashioned lamp and post that always remains lighted. The second is a time capsule that was buried in 1979.

The green was given a face lift for its 125th anniversary and as one of the turnkey projects that eventually saw portions of downtown Southington renovated, with vintage street lights, benches, trees and bricked sidewalks added.

What became known as the Southington Renaissance Project became the most extensive renovation and sprucing up of the downtown region since the aforementioned time James F. Pratt lobbied local businesses to create a vibrant, attractive and workable Town Green.

James Pratt most certainly would be proud.



**“Those who cannot remember the past are
condemned to repeat it.”**

George Santayana (1863 - 1952)

Volunteer!

We need volunteers! Join a committee and get involved! Below is a brief description of the committees and their purpose.

Program Committee

This committee proposes presents and schedules various programs and exhibits in keeping with the goals of the Society.

House Committee

This committee oversees collections and rooms of the Society as well as the use and arrangement of its contents. It recommends to the Board the acceptance or rejection of gifts or loans of articles and the preservation and protection of the artifacts.

IT Committee

The IT Committee meets as necessary to maintain IT hardware and software and to recommend appropriate upgrades. IT also maintains the Society's internet presence, including the website, facebook, etc.

Schoolhouse Committee

The Schoolhouse Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Board as to the maintenance, preservation and security of the schoolhouses, grounds and their contents.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for finding ways to attract new members to the Society. This committee will also send out membership renewals and keep an updated membership list.

Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee provides refreshments for Programs and Meetings.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises the Treasurer with respect to the care and investment of funds of the Society.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee has the mission of creating ideas to raise funds for the Society.



Featured Artifact



Fireplace Bellows
c. 1820-1830

Manufactured
BY
L.M. JOHNSON
SOUTHINGTON
CON.



Spring / Summer Schedule

Monday Feb. 24, 7pm – Member Meeting

Thursday March 13, 7pm – Dr. Ira Spar - Civil War Veteran’s Health Care

Monday March 24, 7pm – Member Meeting

Saturday April 5, 1pm – Former Rep. Nancy Johnson - Recollections of 4 U.S. Presidents

Thursday April 10, 6:30pm - Ray Sinibaldi, Fenway Park *At The Library*

Monday April 28, 7pm – Member Meeting

Monday May 12, 7pm – Member Meeting

May...Date TBA - Alphonse D’Angelo, Depression Glass

Monday June 23, 7pm – Annual Meeting

Sunday June 22, 1pm - Ron Turcott - WWI, The Navy War

Sunday July 20, 1pm Ron Turcott - WWI, Trench Warfare

Check out the new updated website for news, program info and more!

www.southingtonhistory.org

About the Southington Historical Society

The Southington Historical Society was founded in 1965 through the endeavors of the Greater Southington Chamber of Commerce. In addition to the Chamber of Commerce office, meetings were held in a number of locations, including the First Congregational Church, Just Buttons Museum and the Historical Room at the former Southington Public Library. The mission of the Southington Historical Society is to serve as the historical resource center for the town of Southington; to provide educational programs; to collect, interpret and display materials pertaining to the history of the town and its people; to inspire public involvement in and appreciation of its heritage and culture. Without a permanent home, this was a difficult mission to accomplish.

In 1974, the Society approached the town of Southington with a proposal to allow the establishment of a “Historical Museum and Learning Center” in the old library building. The proposed “living museum” would include: the original historical room to be used for permanent displays, a Research Center for people interested in studying the history of Southington, a Craft/Meeting Room to include lessons on some of the lost arts of our ancestors, and a Children’s Room to be used to foster an appreciation of local history to Southington’s youth.

The Town of Southington embraced the idea and for nearly 40 years has been supportive in the society’s efforts to preserve Southington’s history.

The Society’s priority today is to regroup, recruit and renew its promise to the Southington community.

The Society is a nonprofit organization funded entirely by annual membership dues, annual appeals, fundraising events, grants and a maintenance account provided by the town for the Sylvia Bradley Building. In addition to the Museum, the Southington Historical Society maintains the South End and West Street schoolhouses.