

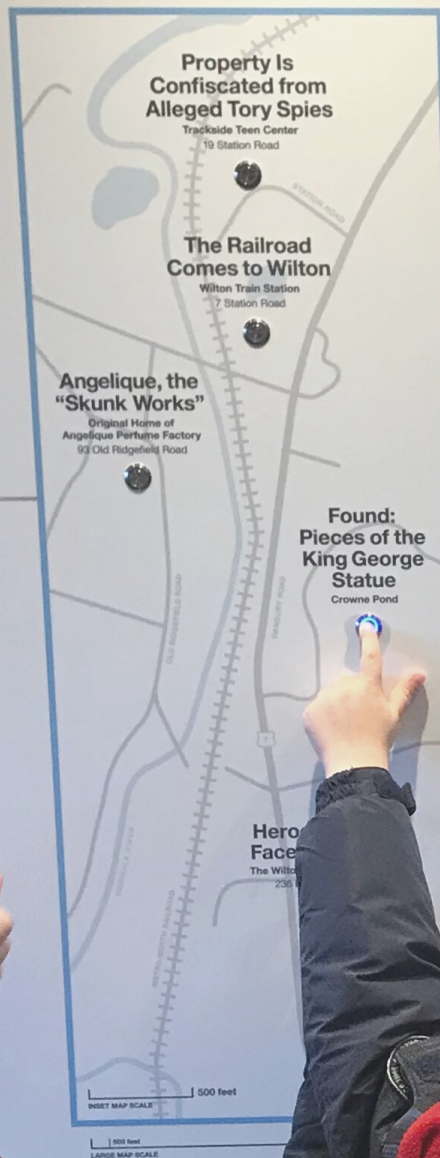
History Is Here

Since its founding in 1938, the Wilton Historical Society has preserved the legends, landmarks, and objects of more than two centuries of town history. While the Society has grown to include 18 period buildings across three campuses, it has remained committed to its core mission: to preserve and shine a light on the multilayered story of the town of Wilton, Connecticut.

Wilton's history isn't confined to the Historical Society's campuses. Many of Wilton's addresses, parks, and intersections offer vibrant links to its past. This History V

Annual Report 2019-2020

Wilton Historical Society



Wilton

Spotted: The Old Leatherman
Home of John and Alan Lomax
67 Belden Hill Road

Lead Belly in Wilton
Home of John and Alan Lomax
67 Belden Hill Road

Slave in Wilton
Unconfirmed of Spruce

A Soccer Legend
Kristine Lilly Field
395 Danbury Road

The Wilton Flood
Cannondale Train Station
22 Caydon Road

A Farming Heritage
Ambler Farm
257 Harbutt Street

The Last One-Room

A Station on the Underground Railroad
Home of William Wakeman
36 Seelye Road

Home to 1,000 Cows
Gunning Farm
Turner Ridge

In Search of Ice
Kent Pond

Wilton and Brooklyn B
Quarry Head Station
Between 760 and 764 Road

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear members and friends,

It goes without saying that 2020 was an unprecedented and historic year and the Wilton Historical Society was touched by every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our hard-working staff worked tirelessly to find new ways to remain relevant and keep ourselves involved in the Wilton community. Programs for children, lectures, our involvement with STAR Inc., Booked for Lunch and exhibits became virtual all the while trying to raise funds in a world devoid of in-person fundraisers. Much success was found with these different formats.

Like everyone, we struggled with this new world order but we're proud of our Staff, our Board of Directors, our members and our friends who continued to support the Wilton Historical Society in every way including financially.

We're moving on to 2021 with continued restrictions but also continued resiliency and creativity. Thank you to all of you for being a part of our present and our future- all so we can remember and celebrate our past.
Stay well, everyone.

Janet Foster
President



CO-DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear members and friends,

The Wilton Historical Society's tagline is "History is Here". Between COVID-19, climate concerns, racial reckoning and political divides, it is abundantly clear that we are living through historic times. While the issues are national, the impact is local. It was crucial to stay connected to our community and continue the mission to "shine a light on the making and meaning of history". It was a difficult year, but not without unexpected rewards.

The fiscal year (Oct 2019 – Sept 2020) started on a positive note. A well-attended fundraiser, the American Artisan Show was followed by the beloved train show. February saw Colonial-life school field trip programs for 850+ students, and we opened "Remembering Dave: A Brubeck Family Album". A suffrage exhibition and the spring fundraiser, Objects of Desire, were on schedule.

But then COVID-19 struck. On March 11 the museum closed to the public: everything ground to a halt. It was time to pivot. We discovered the joys (?) of Zoom meetings. Creative staff debuted "Citizens at Last: Hannah Ambler, Grace Schenck and the Vote" our first entirely online exhibition. "History is Here" videos launched, as did the "COVID Collects" project, while programs went online. So far with PPP funds, grants, and support from our members and community, we have survived.

What have we learned? Patience and kindness are essential in keeping teams productive. The staff is small but mighty! The board and members are resilient and determined to keep the organization strong. On-line programs reach wider audiences than in-person events, and we are more confident in using technology. We will dig even deeper in the coming fiscal year, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Be healthy and of good cheer!
Kim and Allison



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Greg Rodiger, Vice President, Finance
Karl Dolnier, Co-Vice President, Buildings & Grounds
Leland Wilson, Co-Vice President, Buildings & Grounds, Emeritus Trustee
Catherine Romer, Co-Vice President, Collections
Sue Sherwood, Co-Vice President, Collections
Hal Higby, Vice President, Development
Meaghan Donovan, Secretary
Dottie Jankowski, Vice President, Education & Volunteers
Virginia Benin, Vice President, Historic Preservation

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Katy Williams

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Ruth Wolfe

Roger Valkenburgh, Esq., Legal Counsel

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Allison Gray Sanders, Co-Director
Nick Foster, Associate Curator & Museum Admin.
Katherine Karlik, Museum Educator
Rich Perrone, Property Manager
Lee Rossetter, Controller



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FROM GREG RODIGER, VP FINANCE

In a year like no other, the Historical Society ended the FY strongly, thanks to faithful donors, flexibility with tenants, and our PPP loan (forgiven after the FY ended). Our appreciation and thanks to all involved!

WILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Statement of Financial Position

September 30, 2020

ASSETS

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 155,748
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts	6,633
Prepaid expenses	17,797
Merchandise inventory	21,203
Total current assets	201,381

Noncurrent assets

Restricted cash	4,517
Investments	1,374,988
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	2,507,828
Total assets	\$ 4,088,714

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 307
Unearned revenue	10,935
Payroll Protection Program loan payable	46,000
Total current liabilities	57,242

Noncurrent liabilities

Security deposits	30,837
Total liabilities	88,079

Net assets

Net assets without donor restrictions	3,981,803
Net assets with donor restrictions	18,832
Total net assets	4,000,635

Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 4,088,714
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WILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended September 30, 2020

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions

REVENUES

Museum operations	
Contributions	\$ 40,644
Membership Dues	18,950
Fundraising Events	
Artisan Show (net of direct expenses of \$47,330)	48,241
Spring Show (net of direct expenses of \$6,634)	15,166
Admissions	21,639
Program fees	23,687
Gift shop sales	17,850
Other revenue	2,689
Rental properties revenue	379,132
Investment income	145,366
Net assets released from restrictions	47,783
Total revenues	\$ 761,147

EXPENSES

Program support	
Museum operations	\$ 355,089
Rental properties	195,363
Management and general	69,273
Fundraising	23,725
Total expenses	643,450

Change in net assets without donor restrictions

117,697

Net Assets With Donor Restrictions

Restricted contributions	51,786
Net assets released from restrictions	(47,783)

Change in net assets with donor restrictions

4,003

Total change in net assets	121,700
Net assets, beginning of year	3,878,935
Net assets, end of year	\$ 4,000,635

EDUCATION, PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERS

The first half of our fiscal year filled our historic buildings with the delightful sounds of in-person programs - squeals of surprise at Ghost Night, eerie conjuring of Spirits of the Past in Sharp Hill Cemetery, cries of glee at the Train Show Scavenger Hunt, the chopping of flax during the fifth grade field trip, the mmmms of children and adults making Valentine's Day chocolates, and so many more sounds of learning, fun and discovery....the 2nd half was quieter as we learned the difficulties and wonders of Zoom. We had virtual Booked for Lunch meetings with authors, STAR, Inc. art and cooking classes, lectures, discussions and more. When we reopen, we will have new programs as well as annual favorites.

All of these programs and field trips were accomplished with the help of many dedicated volunteers. To all of you who lent a hand or a mind, thank you and we look forward to welcoming you back and thanking you in person.

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AMBLER FARM AMERICAN LEGION POST 86
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DAR
HURLBUTT STREET SCHOOLHOUSE
KIWANIS CLUB LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
MS PRESIDENT US MUSIC ON THE HILL
UCONN MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM
WILTON GARDEN CLUB
WILTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST
WILTON LIBRARY WILTON WOMEN'S CLUB

"WILTON HISTORICAL HAS BEEN A LIFE LINE TO OUR PARTICIPANTS . . . THEIR TEACHINGS HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE. THEIR TALENT, KNOWLEDGE, HEART AND HUMOR HAS BEEN THE PERFECT MEDICINE FOR THESE TIMES."

MARTHA SPIEGEL,
STAR, INC.



DaltonDiCamillo

Winner of the 2020

Walter R.T. Smith Student

Historian Award

Presented
to a senior at Wilton High School
for outstanding achievement
and interest in
history and a record of
community service.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS



Preserving and maintaining nineteen historic structures across three campuses, and leasing out spaces to as many as fifteen different commercial and residential tenants is this committee's challenging mission. Revenues generated by rentals are essential as they substantially support the organization.

This FY the committee navigated through varying levels of financial distress experienced by tenants struggling with COVID impacts. Co-VP Lee Wilson's efforts kept most rentals in place with carefully considered deferments. With an eye on the budget, maintenance focused on roof repairs and a necessary oil tank replacement.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Committee issued public statements on commercial development's impact on historic buildings and areas, and worked on creating resources for owners of historic homes.



**A NEW ROOF FOR THE
C 1740 BETTS HOUSE WAS
FUNDED BY THE 2019 CT
NEIGHBORHOOD TAX
CREDIT PROGRAM**

**OUR THANKS TO:
EVERSOURCE ENERGY
SANTA ENERGY
WILCO LIFE
INSURANCE**

AT THE MUSEUM



COMMITTEES 2019-20

American Artisan Show, 2019

Judy Higby, Chair

Heather Bower Greg Chann Moira Craw Karl Dolnier Meaghan Donovan

Janet Foster Peter Gaboriault Hal Higby Dottie Jankowski Dick Martin

Andrea McLaughlin Catherine Romer Karen Tartell Katy Williams

Betts Store Andrea McLaughlin

Buildings and Grounds

Karl Dolnier, Co-Chair and Lee Wilson, Co-Chair

Greg Chann Kevin Craw Bob Faesy Peter Gaboriault Martin Hamar

Chris Lavin Dick Martin Rich Perrone/Staff Property Manager

Collections

Catherine Romer, Co-Chair and Sue Sherwood, Co-Chair

Nancy Brautigam Julie Hughes Carol Russell Nick Foster, Associate Curator

Development/Endowment

Hal Higby, Chair

Greg Chann Kevin Craw Greg Perry Greg Rodiger Roger Valkenburgh

Education

Dottie Jankowski, Chair

Ellen Goldman Virginia Gunther Sally Healy Rebecca Lin

Katherine Karlik, Museum Educator

Finance

Greg Rodiger, Chair

Gini Benin Greg Chann Ann Duffy Hal Higby Dick Martin

Lee Rossetter, Controller

Historic Preservation

Gini Benin, Chair

Dick Dubow Colleen Fawcett Janet Foster Donna Harakas Hal Higby

John Kalamarides Rebecca Lin

COMMITTEES 2019-20

Library-Lecture Series

Michael Bellacosa, Co-Chair and Kim Mellin, Co-Chair
Max Gabrielson Mary Gail Gristina Virginia Gunther Steven Hudspeth
Elaine Tai-Lauria

Membership

Bill Brennan, Co-Chair and Karen Tartell, Co-Chair
Dick Dubow John Kalamarides Katy Williams

Mission/Vision: Name Change Exploration

Janet Foster Dick Dubow Mary Gail Gristina Martin Hamar Hal Higby
John Kalamarides

Nominating Committee

Greg Chann, Chair
Kevin Craw Judy Higby Tierney O'Hearn Greg Rodiger Katy Williams

Objects of Desire, 2020

Greg Chann, Co-Chair and Katy Williams, Co-Chair
Janet Foster Mary Gail Gristina Hal Higby Dottie Jankowski

Train Show

Richie Furman, Chair
Brian Dobson Bart Goldberg Martin Hamar Jon Perelman Roger Smith

Volunteers

Dottie Jankowski, Chair
Donna Harakas

AMERICAN ARTISAN SHOW NOV. 2019



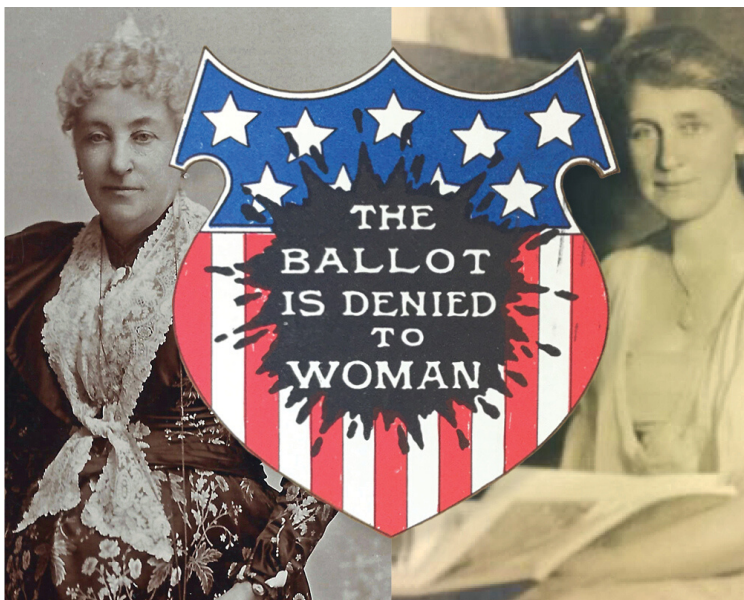


REMEMBERING DAVE: A BRUBECK FAMILY ALBUM

EXHIBITIONS

As a pianist, bandleader and composer, Dave Brubeck (1920-2012) is widely acknowledged as one of America's most significant post-swing era jazz musicians, creating a body of music that was bold and accessible. The exhibition also highlights his impact as a composer, a performer, a family man and civil rights activist. **Remembering Dave: A Brubeck Family Album** presents additional materials that speak to Dave's life in Wilton with his wife Iola, and kids Darius, Matt, Chris, Dan and Cathy.

CITIZENS AT LAST: HANNAH AMBLER, GRACE SCHENCK AND THE VOTE

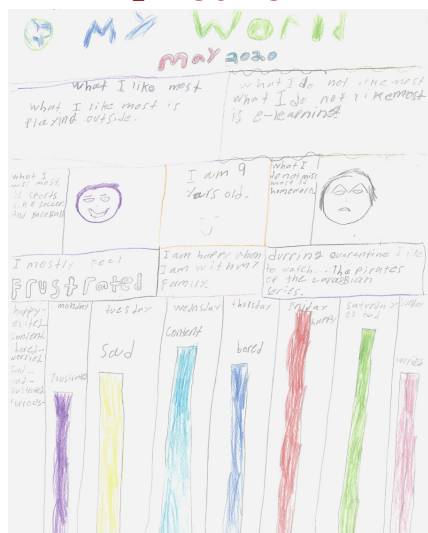


The suffrage movement didn't just happen in Hartford and Washington, D.C., it happened here in Wilton, too. **Citizens at Last: Hannah Ambler, Grace Schenck, and the Vote** is a digital exhibition documenting the role of Wilton women in the fight to win the vote. Available online 24/7, learn about these strong women and the different aspects of the suffrage movement – methods, achievements, opponents, and even their shortcomings. Viewed by 1100+!

This project was made possible by a generous grant from the Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust.



COVID COLLECTS PROJECT



COLLECTIONS

History Now: COVID-19, is a three-part project in which the museum is practicing “rapid-response collecting” an active process in which contemporary objects are acquired in response to major moments in recent history. Part one is a survey which captures information about experiences during this historic event. Part two is COVID Collecting, during which the Society will seek unique donated objects related to the pandemic. Accepted items will become part of the museum’s permanent collection. Part three is a collaboration with the public schools, which includes artwork from the middle school and a documentary from Wilton High School student Dalton DiCamillo capturing the opinions and insights of fellow high school students.

"GRANDMA'S KITCHEN" AWARD WINNING EXHIBITION

JUST LIKE GRANDMA USED TO MAKE: A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE OF 300 YEARS OF KITCHEN HISTORY Associate Curator Nick Foster's reinstallation of the Betts turn of the century kitchen was a 2020 Winner of an Award of Merit for Individual Achievement in Exhibition Design from the Connecticut League of History Organizations.

The "Please Touch!" installation is popular with adults and kids alike.



HISTORY IS HERE

We developed new on-line programs during the pandemic to safely connect with members and the community. Associate Curator Nick Foster launched a series called *History is Here* on social media and the website. The five-minute videos – accurate, pithy and entertaining – capture an aspect of Wilton history which he writes, presents, records and edits. Since the first episode debuted in April 2020, topics have ranged from Wilton's blue-stocking post as a dry town to the role of the Electoral College. The response has been gratifying, with 3500+views to date.

What's It Wednesdays, featuring an arcane object from the past, made a return to social media, and was another way to promote the collections and connect the public with our shared past.



Wilton Historical Society

History Is Here: Episode 5

**From Monarch to Musket Balls:
The Story of King George III's Statue**

GRANTS/BEQUESTS



Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust

Funding *Citizens at Last: Hannah Ambler, Grace Schenck and the Vote* Online Exhibition
\$9500

Connecticut Humanities:

CARES Act/COVID 19 Relief \$15,000

Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

Stewardship Relief Grant \$1,000

Connecticut 2019 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program - Reroof c 1740 Betts House

Santa Energy Corporation \$5000

Yankee Gas Services/Eversource
Energy \$7285.71

Wilco Life Insurance \$10,000

Bequests: Mrs. Terry Goodwin

GIVING/MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to all our generous donors who contributed during the 2019-2020 FY.

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Abrahamson Family Foundation
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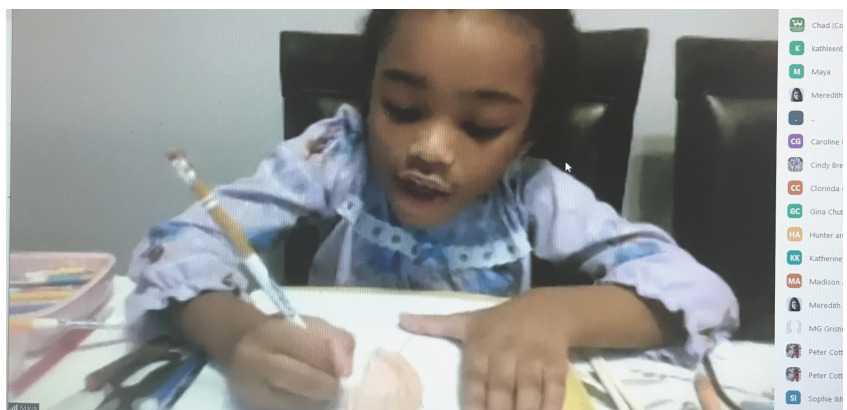
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5th State Distillery

Janet and Michael Foster

Glengate

Donna Harakas/Wild Roses and Blooms

Michael Hess

Judy and Hal Higby

Skip Kern

Jarrett Liotta

Little Pub

Andrea McLaughlin

Nod Hill Brewery

Oak and Almond Restaurant

Parlor Pizza and Bar

Pat Scully Design

Zelie Pforzheimer

Red Rooster Pub

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Stop and Shop

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