

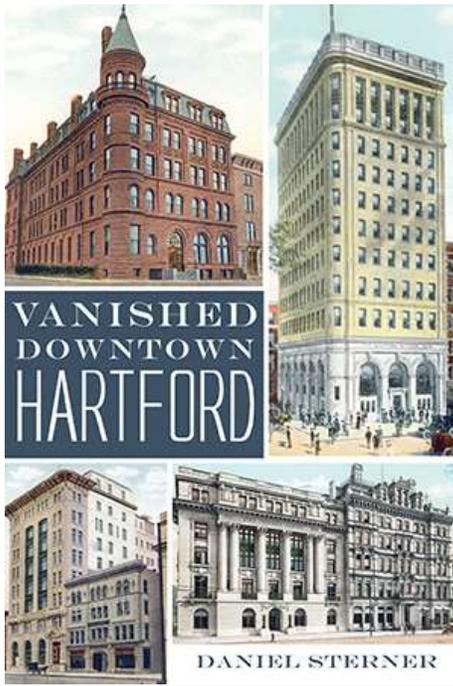


Ellington Historical Society

P.O. Box 73

Ellington, Conn. 06029

September 2016 Newsletter



The Ellington Historical Society will meet on Thursday, September 22, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hall Memorial Library at 93 Main Street.

After a brief business meeting, a program will be presented by Daniel Sterner, author of *Vanished Downtown Hartford*. Sterner is a guide at the Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe Houses in Hartford and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum in Wethersfield, Connecticut. A lifelong resident of Connecticut, he writes the blog *Historic Buildings of Connecticut*, which won a Hartford Preservation Alliance Award in 2008.

The program is free, and the public is invited. New members are always welcome.

Refreshments will be provided by Nancy Long and Tim Fahy. A sign-up sheet for doing refreshments this year will be circulated at the meeting. We urge members to help with baking for our meetings. Our attendance has increased due to the programming from Hall Memorial Library and we need three bakers per meeting.

News from the President-Tim Fahy

At our annual meeting in June, no one was willing to run for office, so the existing officers agreed to continue to serve as their time allows, and Jim Long has joined the Executive Board.

New Member

We welcome new member Maureen O'Neil of Ellington.

News from the Curator-Nancy Long

This summer's hot weather made for some quieter summer activities, and we did close for a couple of Thursday afternoons due to the heat. We received a visit from Ed and Ann Clowes from Virginia Beach, Virginia. Ed is a grand nephew of Nellie McKnight (his grandmother was Nellie's older sister Emily) and he wanted to see Aunt Nellie's house and the center of town in his travels in New England this summer. He was especially impressed with the newly painted Ellington Congregational Church next door!

Night Blooming Cereus

Nellie McKnight's evening celebration of the opening of her Night Blooming Cereus is pictured in our photo gallery and the story often told in describing Nellie's interests. As a gardener I have been fascinated by these stories and bought my own plant this past winter. In late July I was rewarded for my diligence to light, water and fertilizer and witnessed the opening of five blooms on my Night Blooming Cereus. We took many pictures but none capture the experience of seeing this huge bloom open and the wonderful fragrance from it. Nellie was right--it is quite an event!



We have been monitoring the health of the large sugar maple tree in the museum yard for several years with increased concern for falling limbs on our property and the church. It was finally decided to take down the tree since our budget could not afford yearly pruning to extend the life of the tree. The job was completed this week and this photo shows the last upright branch before it was taken down. The stump will be ground and the area landscaped in the spring. The view from the back veranda certainly features much more sky and the church grounds!



News from the Archivist-Lynn Kloter Fahy

Member Debby Wallace came across a reference to the Spalding Family Papers, which are held in microfilm format at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. Several letters were from the Sexton family, which is of interest to us because the house which is now the Nellie McKnight Museum was built by Charles Sexton in 1812. I was able to obtain copies of two letters and a composition. While there are copyright restrictions that limit quoting from, publishing, or reproducing the letters, I can tell you the subjects discussed.

In a composition written in June 1841, Miranda Sexton Spalding wrote of a settlement in Ellington that she called, "New Guinea," which was inhabited by African Americans. The 1840 U.S. Census confirms that there were twenty-four "free colored persons" living in town. Most lived with their families, although Lemuel Warner had a male identified only as being between the ages of 10 and 24 living with him. He probably helped out on the farm. According to Miranda, the settlement was between the center of Ellington and Crystal Lake in the part of town known as the Equivalent. She referred to these African Americans as descendants of Ham, the second son of Noah, because of the belief at the time that Ham was black.

October meeting, Thursday 27th at the Hall Memorial Library, 7:00 p.m.



Jenny Stedman of the Connecticut Historical Society will present a program on “Witches in Connecticut.” The trials and executions of witches in Connecticut predated the more famous Salem witch panic by over 40 years. Hear the stories of some of the women and men accused, tried, and executed as witches and learn how Connecticut successfully controlled the spread of witch accusations long before Salem erupted in panic and violence.

Membership dues are due in September and we have enclosed a form to fill out and include with your dues payment.

Ellington Historical Society Membership Dues

Class of Membership	_____	Individual \$10.00
	_____	Senior Individual \$8.00 (Over 62)
	_____	Family \$20.00
	_____	Senior Family \$15.00 (Over 62)
(Check one)	_____	Patron \$25.00
	_____	Business \$50.00

Name _____
 Mailing Address _____

 Telephone Number _____
 *E-mail address _____

Make check payable to: Ellington Historical Society

Mail this form and payment to: Ellington Historical Society
 P.O. Box 73
 Ellington, CT 06029

* If you would like to receive your EHS newsletter by e-mail as a Microsoft Word file instead of “snail mail,” please include your e-mail address.