



Ellington Historical Society

P.O. Box 73

Ellington, Conn. 06029

February 2019 Newsletter

The Ellington Historical Society will meet on Thursday, February 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hall Memorial Library at 93 Main Street.



“With a stage and film career that spanned six decades, Katharine Hepburn is an American icon. Born and raised in Connecticut, Hepburn had a career in stage, film and television that reflected the changing role of women in American society. Challenging the norms of the day, she took control of her image and identity by establishing a unique sense of style, which influenced countless women, fashion designers, and the informal, elegant approach to American style that continues to resonate today. The story of her life-long ties to Connecticut offers a complete picture of how Hepburn became the woman and the star she was. This presentation will link her career and legacy to her roots in Connecticut to ask how she achieved her truly extraordinary legacy.” ... From the website of the Connecticut Historical Society, which will present the program.

Refreshments for the meeting will be provided by Alex Cardoni and Joe Ouellette.

News from the Curator-Nancy Long

In 1952, the Ellington Congregational Church published a spiral bound book titled “Early Ellington Village.” Church members and residents submitted anecdotes and researched articles about the early days of Ellington. I referred to this book when arranging the current Hall Memorial Library display of old license plates found in the McKnight home.

There are several stories about prominent residents adjusting to the new “machines” after a lifetime of using a horse and buggy. The following excerpt from *Dr. Edwin T. Davis Country Doctor in Ellington 1891-1912* tells this story:

In 1901, Dr. Davis bought his first automobile, a bright red 18 horse power Ford Runabout. There was no such thing as driving lessons or licenses then. You had instructions to show you how to run the machine, and then the mechanic stepped out and you were on your own. When he

was trying out his new red car, Dr. Davis was driving down Park Street in Rockville when the brakes failed, and he went rolling down hill to land on the board walk, only a little worse for the experience. After that he used the car without mishap, but only in good weather if he wasn't in a hurry.

Later in the same article:

When Dr. Davis answered a call to the Sikes farm, he arrived by horse and buggy. Charlie Sikes greeted him by saying, "Doc, I expected to see you drive in with your new car." The doctor replied, "You said you needed me in a hurry!"

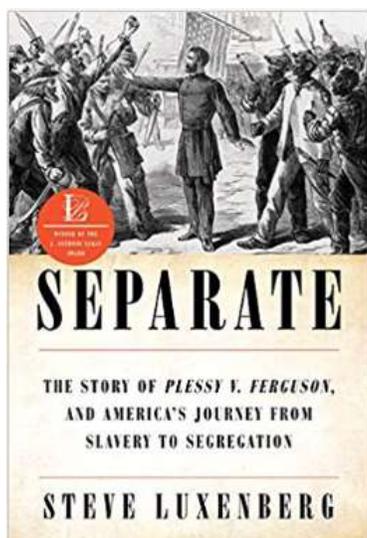


News from the Archivist-Lynn Kloter Fahy

Separate: The Story of Plessy v. Ferguson & America's Journey from Slavery to Segregation by Steve Luxenberg, Washington Post Associate Editor, will be published on February 12.

Henry Billings Brown, who grew up in Ellington and was later appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, played an important part in the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling, which established the doctrine "separate but equal" in 1896. Brown endorsed separation. Racial segregation was deemed not to violate the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guaranteed equal protection under the law. This ruling wasn't overturned until the Brown v. Board of Education ruling in 1954.

Brown lived in the former Judge John Hall house on Frog Hollow Road, across from the school Hall established, the Ellington School, which graduated many distinguished graduates. Brown went on to study at Yale and returned to Ellington to study in the law office of John Brockway before he moved to Detroit, where he was residing when he was appointed to the Court by President William Henry Harrison.



Luxenberg will be giving an author talk at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 18 at the Massachusetts Historical Society on Boylston Street in Boston. Details of the event are on the MHS website.

<https://www.masshist.org/calendar>

Halladay windmill

Daniel Halladay is recognized as the inventor of the modern windmill which is used for pumping well water using wind energy. It was patented in 1854 and was designed and manufactured on the property of blacksmith Albert Dart in Ellington by the newly formed partnership of Halladay, John Burnham, Jr. and Henry McCray. The company relocated the next year to South Coventry and then to Batavia, Illinois.

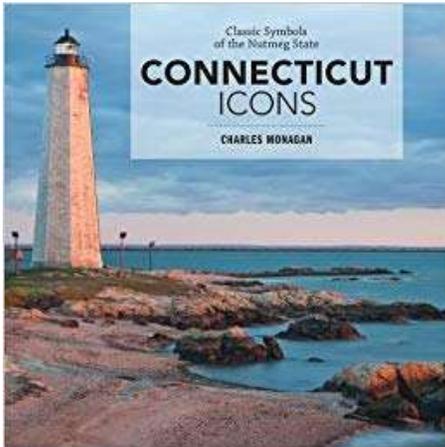
Ellington Historical Society member Jon Roe found an article concerning the invention in the Connecticut State Library online collection of newspapers. Here is part of the article, which was originally published in the *New York Tribune* and reprinted in the July 27, 1854 edition of the *Tolland County Gazette*.

☞ The following notice of a Self-Regulating Wind Mill, invented by Daniel Halliday, and manufactured and jointly owned with Mr. H. by Burnham & McCray of Ellington, we clip from the *New York Tribune*. The allusion to Ellington as "an obscure country village" by our Babylonian contemporary will be infinitely amusing to his Connecticut readers. Obscure country village, forsooth! Why, man with a white coat, what place are you talking about! We advise you to take a trip up into this direction, and look at Ellington, one of the most beautiful, oldest and most thriving farming towns in the State, and more centrally located than two-thirds of them.

Daniel Halliday, a mechanic in an obscure country village, Ellington, Connecticut, has done what the world of mechanics have sought for in vain for centuries. He has invented and put in successful operation a Windmill with *self-furling sails*. The mill built by him has five feet wings, that is, the diameter of the wind wheel is ten feet, and it has been in operation for six months without a hand being touched to it to regulate the sails. It runs 15 days without stopping day or night, and it has stood through some hard gales; the beauty of the improvement is, that it does stand still when the wind rages hardest, with the edge of the wings to the wind, and as it lulls they gradually resume their position for a gentle breeze. It is so contrived that nothing but a squall of great severity falling upon it without a moment's warning can produce damage.

<http://cslib.cdmhost.com/digital/collection/p15019coll9/id/4240/rec/3>

April meeting, Thursday April 25, 2019 at the Hall Memorial Library, 7:00 p.m.



Author Charles Monagan will give a talk on his latest book, *Connecticut Icons*. In his book, with a collection of photos, anecdotes, and little-known facts, Monagan presents fifty of his favorite icons—from the hot lobster roll to the Yale Bowl, the U.S.S. Nautilus to the Merritt Parkway, and many others.

June meeting, Thursday, June 27, 2019 at the Hall Memorial Library, 6:30

Annual meeting and potluck supper for members at 6:30 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at Hall Memorial Library, 93 Main Street.

Visit our web site at <http://www.ellingtonhistsoc.org> and our Facebook page.