

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

email: harwhistsoc@gmail.com

THE BLUE SIGN



Road signs have become such a regular part of the landscape that people often pass by without “seeing” them. Such may be the case with the blue sign on Harwinton’s town green pictured here. The sign is located at the intersection of South Road and Route 4 (once known as the Hartford-Litchfield Turnpike). Drivers passing by are focused on navigating the curve in the road and they often do not notice the sign.

The blue sign with its brief history of Harwinton has been there since 1976. Now 47 years old, it was originally made to order by the Connecticut Historical Commission as part of the 1976 bicentennial marking the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Similar markers can be seen in most of the 169 towns in Connecticut. Some have been moved inside municipal buildings and some others may have been damaged or simply relocated.

This is the wording on Harwinton’s blue sign:

HARWINTON

The town was settled in 1731, named in 1732 from **Har**(tford) and **Win**(dsor), **ton**(town) and became incorporated in October, 1737. Located on the Hartford-Litchfield Turnpike, Harwinton was primarily an agricultural community with many part-time industries carried on in conjunction with farming. Items produced included bricks, tinware, pitchforks, hats, cutlery, whetstones, barrels, and clocks by Hopkins and Alfred, Orson Barber, and Sheldon Osborne. Lead Mine Brook and its tributaries provided water power for many of the early industries.

Construction of the first church began in 1740 and the first school was established in 1741. In the 1800's the town boasted two academies and two boarding schools. For many years there were twelve school districts throughout the town. One-room schoolhouses were in use until 1948. Erected by the Town of Harwinton and the Connecticut Historical Commission 1976

The Armorial Bearings

At the top center of the Harwinton bicentennial sign is a replica of the Armorial Bearings adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1931. The Arms include a shield of rococo design of a white field having in the center three grape vines, supported and bearing fruit. Not on the Harwinton sign, but often included is a

white streamer with the motto
“QUI TRANSTULIT SUSTINET”
(He Who Transplanted Still Sustains)

Harwinton Historical Society

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Vice President: Nancy Lyons
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harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Harwinton Historical Society

**PO Box 84
Harwinton, CT 06791**

860-482-7978

**Visit the HHS web site:
www.harwintonhistory.org**

**Special History Program Offered
Now Through July**

The Harwinton Historical Society Program Committee offers a variety of informative, engaging and varied programs throughout the year. In 2021 and 2022 covid restrictions made it advisable to provide information in "History Deliveries" sent via e-mail, or on a Zoom platform. That approach is likely to be the same this year, but in-person programs will be scheduled, if possible.

This year a special program on Connecticut state history is being offered. Zoom sessions began on Feb. 2 and will continue on Thursdays at 1 p.m. until July. The programs will also be available on a recorded link that will be emailed after each 45 to 60-minute lecture.

The presenter is Jared Day, PhD, who taught American History at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburg for 16 years. He now teaches at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich and is a Connecticut resident.

If interested, be sure you are on the contact list. To receive the Zoom link send a request to harwhistsoc@gmail.com There is no charge for participating in this program.

The four lectures during February will explore southern New England in the era of earliest European contact with native American groups as well as the goals and hardships faced by Puritan groups when they came to this region in the early 17th century.

The Other Harwinton Road Sign



Also located on the town green is a unique wooden sign that has stood on the town Green for over 200 years. During that time it has been repaired, replaced and repainted.

The use of a sign as a means of communication in that spot dates back to the town’s original proprietors in the 1700s. It not only provided directions to travelers but also served as a place for the town’s government to post legal notices in a central location. Originally a simple post, the sign took on its iconic form between 1844 and 1860 when Lewis Smith, the town’s probate judge, designed it in the form of a box. The box provided an overhang to protect the legal notices attached to the post from the elements. These sign-boxes were used throughout the town to inform residents of pending legal matters.

The Harwinton Historical Society currently helps maintain the sign-box, a replica of Lewis Smith’s design. It has been damaged and repaired several times.

\$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP

OFFERED BY:

THE HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 84

HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791

email: harwhistsoc@gmail.com

***Must be postmarked by April 15, 2023**

**Please mail to the *Harwinton Historical Society*
- *Attention: Scholarship* at the above address**

*Applications available at:
high school guidance departments*

Harwinton Library

Harwinton Town Hall

Email request to harwhistsoc@gmail.com

The applicant must be a student who is a resident of Harwinton and/or active in the Harwinton Historical Society.

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP / DUES APPLICATION

Annual dues are \$15 per person and should be renewed annually on or before the last day of February. Please use this form for new memberships, renewals and changes of contact information.

Name (s):

Address:

Email: _____

Phone; _____ Cell Phone; _____

New Member _____

Membership Renewal _____

COMMENTS

Please make checks payable to the Harwinton Historical Society
Mail to:
PO Box 84
Harwinton, CT 06791