

Harwinton Historical Society December 2025 Newsletter

Happy December 2025!

As we move to the winter holiday season, we at the Harwinton Historical Society have so much to be thankful for. For 55 years we have been honored to serve the community and beyond.

We share a message of gratitude as we reflect on the accomplishments and collaborations of 2025. We have preserved and shared history as we engaged the community and beyond.

We wish you all the best in 2026!

Harwinton Celebrates America's 250th with an Impressive Logo



The Harwinton America 250th Committee received a number of creative logo entries for the contest requesting a visual identity for our community's commemoration of this historic anniversary. The Committee thanks all who submitted entries. After careful review of the great entries and consultation with Harwinton Graphics (who will create Harwinton America 250 merchandise) Harwinton has an impressive unique logo thanks to Tammie Anderson Valentine. Tammie created four historic Harwinton buildings (First District One-room School (cared for by Harwinton Historical Society), Harwinton Congregational Church, Hungerford Museum, and Harwinton Community Hall) to frame the top of the celebration message. Tammie is a Mills graduate and a highly active community volunteer.

The logo competition was open to residents/taxpayers of Harwinton, as well as individuals connected to organizations, schools, businesses, and other groups in our town. The winning logo will be used to promote events and programs related to the commemoration of America's 250th. The logo will be showcased on printed materials, websites, media, social media, and merchandise.

Thanks to Tammie for sharing her talents and time to create such a special logo for our special town!

Exclusive Harwinton America 250th Commemorative Items Available

Merchandise featuring the new Harwinton America 250 logo is available! Show your community pride and commemorate this significant milestone with unique items perfect for yourself or for gifting!

All items are available for purchase online through the Harwinton Graphics website: <https://harwintongraphics.com> OR in person Monday – Friday 8 AM - 4PM at Harwinton Graphics, 15 Burlington Road. Visit the online store and navigate to the *Harwinton America 250th Celebration* section to view offerings in adult and youth sizes OR visit Harwinton Graphics in person to place your order.

T-shirts and polos in short and long sleeves, hoodies, caps, and bags are available. When placing your order, you can choose to pick it up at Harwinton Graphics, 15 Burlington Road, Harwinton, or have it mailed to you. You will receive an email notice or phone call when your items are ready.

To have your items ready for pick-up or delivery before the holidays, please place your orders ASAP!



Samples of Harwinton America 250 merchandise.

HHS Announces Major Step Forward in Catlin Inn Estate Purchase

HHS is delighted to update the exciting progress toward the purchase of the historic Catlin Inn Estate. At the membership meeting held on November 9th, members of the Society voted overwhelmingly to support the HHS Board's recommendation to acquire the property.

The Board of Directors continues to work through the due diligence phase of the process to ensure all aspects of this unique and historically significant property are thoroughly reviewed. The 1760 Catlin Inn Estate located at the corner of Harmony Hill Road and Route 4, is on the Register of Historic Properties. The estate consists of a 2,200 square foot house and 1,596 square foot barn on 4.289 acres. The Catlin family is a foundational family in the history of Harwinton. For more than 250 years hundreds of Catlins have lived in town as outstanding citizens. Numerous Catlins have served in government as Harwinton Selectmen, Connecticut Congressmen, and have fought in both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

At the member meeting, a PowerPoint presentation of photos of the existing buildings and grounds of the Catlin Inn Estate was shared. Photos of the interior spaces of the house (including a floor plan) and barn as well as exterior photos were displayed. The recent A-2 survey was also displayed. Invitations to walk around the grounds were offered several days prior to the meeting. Members who attended were amazed at the size and beauty of the Catlin Inn Estate.

The Harwinton Historical Society BOD is thrilled by the enthusiastic support from its members and the prospect of protecting and preserving the historically significant Catlin Inn Estate, ensuring its place as a community asset for generations to come.

Stay tuned for future updates as we work to secure the future of this cherished piece of Harwinton's heritage!

HHS Annual Membership Renewal & Election of Officers and Directors Slated for January

Are you passionate about furthering the mission of preserving and sharing Harwinton history? Please consider joining Harwinton Historical Society if not currently a member. A membership form is attached; dues are \$15 annually. As a member you will play a vital role in decision making and shaping the future of our organization.

Members are invited to join the HHS BOD team to contribute to leading our mission. BOD provide strategic guidance, oversee financial management, and advocate for our mission. A diverse range of skills and experiences (e.g. strategic planning and governance, financial management and fundraising, marketing and communications, community engagement, historical research/preservation, and legal expertise) make for a well-rounded BOD. As a Board member, you will have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on our community. Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting in January 2026.

Our service to the community can best be accomplished well with many volunteering their time and expertise/skills. Please e-mail (harwhistsoc@gmail.com) with your thoughts and if we can help in any way. We welcome new members and thank current members for your valuable support. *HHS has lots of exciting events/activities in the planning!*

Annual Appeal in Mailboxes Soon

Learning about history allows us to understand the perspectives of others and to empathize with their struggles and triumphs. Each year Harwinton Historical Society's Annual Appeal has provided a base for launching our ongoing contributions to the community. Our mission is to preserve and share Harwinton's/America's rich history through community projects, collaborating with schools and local organizations, exhibits, programs, accessions, research, and publications. Your generosity supports our day-to-day operations and makes our work for our community possible.

In our 55th year, HHS is looking to not only continue with our current momentum, but to expand community involvement/positive impact in our historical town. Some of our contributions this year and a 2026 preview:

- **America 250-** At their June meeting the Harwinton Board of Selectman voted for HHS to take the lead for Harwinton's Celebration of the 250th anniversary of our country. The 250 Committee (HHS & community members) is planning exciting events throughout 2026.
- **HarwintonHistory.org-** newly enhanced HHS **website** was launched. The popular site offers a wide spectrum of detailed information on Harwinton history and HHS Upcoming Events. Updated often!
- **Programs-** More than a dozen on a wide variety of historical topics were enjoyed by large numbers of attendees including *The Beginnings of the National Park Service* (co-sponsor Land Trust); *A Story in Stitches: 48 Years of Harwinton Woman's Club Quilts* in partnership with Harwinton Woman's Club & Library; & HCS student fieldtrips/hands-on lessons.
- **Self-Guided Cemetery Walk available!** Visit South Cemetery between sunrise and sunset to meet/revisit the 9 residents of the past portrayed at the last cemetery walk. Biographies of residents are available in the mailbox at the entrance. Informative and fun! A beautiful outdoor museum!
- **2026 Preview:** ***August- Author/Historian Rudnick-** Search for the Signers: Visiting the Graves of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence; ***October 2026 Cemetery Walk** will feature costumed portrayals of Harwinton Patriots/foundational residents. After months of research, interesting stories of historical facts and trivia set in a background of history of the era will be shared with awesome theatrical skills by community adults and students; ***January- Exhibit at the Library;**
*Many more events are being planned- please see our website and watch for newsletters/announcements.
- **Cemetery Restoration Workshops** have brought respect to our founding residents interred in South Cemetery and will continue once warm weather returns. More than 150 gravestones that were toppled or leaning have been reset/repared; invasives removed, and more than 250 gravestones cleaned allowing inscriptions to be readable. Epitaphs at South Cemetery are being recorded- an important documentation before they are too worn to decipher. A map of Center Cemetery is nearly complete.
- **First District School** (1840 one-room school) and **The Barn Museum** (displaying farm and household items used in Harwinton) located on the grounds of the Harwinton Consolidated School offer a step back in time. Open Houses are posted on our website, and buildings are also open by appointment (harwhistsoc@gmail.com).

***The Harwinton Historical Society is a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Donations can be sent to HHS at P.O. Box 84; Harwinton, CT 06791. A remittance envelope will be posted on the HHS website soon.*

***A tax-smart option: If you are 70½+ you can make a **tax-free gift directly to HHS from your IRA** which will count toward your **RMD** (Required Minimum Distribution.)*

***Also, please consider including The Harwinton Historical Society in your estate plans!*

Your support will allow the preservation and sharing of history while maintaining our expenses including programs, rent, curator supplies, and insurance. We are so grateful for your participation in activities and monetary support! THANK YOU! Please take care. . . and we hope to see you soon!

Annual Harwinton Hometown Celebration Saturday, December 6— Cookie Donation Request

The Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary will again be serving free cookies at the 15th Annual Harwinton Hometown Holiday Celebration from 4 PM to 7 PM on Saturday, December 6, 2025. Each year, they ask members of HHS and other organizations in town to bake or buy cookies for this town function. Support of organizations makes these treats possible.

Cookies may be dropped off at the town hall on Friday, December 5th between 9 AM and 5 PM or any time on Saturday.

UPCOMING EVENTS from our Neighboring Friends:

- President's Club Book Discussion Group on December 8th, 3:15 - 4:15 Zoom; **American Lion: Andrew Jackson by Jon Meacham; Leader Pete Vermilyea.** See Oliver Wolcott Library website for details and link.

-**18th Century Craft Workshop** on December 13th 2:30 - 4:30; Learn to sew a pair of **18th Century mitts** like troops and camp followers would have worn during the COLDEST days of the War for American Independence. Let abigailyanaway@aol.com know you are coming. Workshop will be held at First Litchfield Congregational Church, 21 Torrington Road, Litchfield; Classroom 9 in the Pilgrim House.

-**Wreaths Across America** Saturday, December 13, 2025 @ 12 p.m. (See multiple participating locations online.)

***FROM the HHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS . . .**

Your Board of Directors looks forward to leading HHS in its mission of preserving and sharing local history. Please share your thoughts- *a project, fundraiser, 250th Commemoration, grant/funding availability, area historical programs open to the public, etc.!*

We look forward to seeing you/hearing from you soon! Everyone's involvement will make for a strong and impactful organization. Your time and thoughts are much appreciated.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

HHS BOD: President: Martha Lecko; Vice-President: Elaine Sederquist; Treasurer: Harry Schuh; Secretary: Nancy Lyons; Directors: Bruce Burnett, Kristine David, Carol Kearns, Robert Lecko, Kevin Smail; Curator: Ann Harrington; Building Superintendent: Dennis Andrews; Immediate Past President: Susan McClen

Thank you, Take-a-Chance Star Sponsors:

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