

Greenwich Historical Society

Explore our colorful past



news+programs

january | february 2015

GREENWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is dedicated to promoting Greenwich's unique and colorful past. Our Archives actively chronicle the life of our town for future generations, our programs and exhibitions help people of all ages better understand their connection to history, and our preservation efforts safeguard an architectural heritage that includes the National Historic Landmark Bush-Holley House, the site of the Cos Cob art colony.

BUSH-HOLLEY HISTORIC SITE

is a member of the Connecticut Art Trail, a partnership of 17 world-class museums and historic sites across the state. Discover collections rich in history and heritage, including European masterpieces, American Impressionism, ancient art and contemporary culture.

HOURS

Storehouse Gallery

Open Wednesday through Sunday, 12–4 pm

Docent-led tours of Bush-Holley House 1, 2 and 3 pm

Tours on Saturday and Sunday only during January and February

Library and Archives

Wednesdays, 10 am–12:30 pm and 1 pm–4 pm, or by appointment

ADMISSION

\$10 for adults

\$8 for seniors and students

Admission always free to members.

Free to the public the first Wednesday of every month.

CONTACT US

Greenwich Historical Society
39 Strickland Road
Cos Cob, CT 06807

203-869-6899

www.greenwichhistory.org

DIRECTIONS

Off I-95 at exit 4. Visit

www.greenwichhistory.org for details.



Coming January 2015: View the exhibition online, along with additional essays and videos of exhibition-related lectures.

After the World Broke in Two: WWI and the Fracturing of Poetry and Fiction

Lecture by Professor Laura Winters



Focusing on excerpts from *In Our Time* by Ernest Hemingway, *One of Ours* by Willa Cather (who was connected with the Cos Cob art colony as a patron of the Holley Boarding House)

and *The Great War and Modern Memory* by Paul Fussell, Professor Laura Winters will talk about the impact that the destruction and suffering wrought by WWI had on themes, process and style in American literature and poetry.

Dr. Laura Winters has taught literature, writing and film for 31 years at the College of Saint Elizabeth in Morristown, New Jersey, and has taught for over 20 years in the graduate school at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. She has published *Willa Cather: Landscape and Exile* as well as articles about American literature and film, and is the editor of the Willa Cather Series at FDU (Fairleigh Dickinson University) Press. Winters, who lectured here last year on Willa Cather, is an accessible and engaging speaker with a deep understanding of her subject matter. We look forward to her return visit.

Thursday, January 15, 2015, 1:00 to 2:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15

Ticket includes free admission to Greenwich Faces the Great War in the Storehouse Gallery.

The Millionaires' Unit Documentary Film Screening

The *Millionaires' Unit* is the story of an elite group of college students from Yale who formed a private air militia in preparation for America's entry into WWI. Known as the First Yale Unit and dubbed "the millionaires' unit" by the New York press, they became the founding squadron of the U.S. Naval Air Reserve and were among the first from the United States to enter the Great War. Using the squadron members' letters and diaries, the documentary chronicles the coming of age of these young pioneers against the backdrop of an event that signaled America's emergence as a world power. The film focuses on their service and sacrifice and chronicles a great, untold chapter in American aviation.

The documentary was inspired by the book *The Millionaires' Unit* by Marc Wortman and was seven years in development and production by co-producers Ron King and Darroch Greer. It is being presented to the public to commemorate the centennial of World War I.

Thursday, January 29, 2015, 3:00 to 5:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15

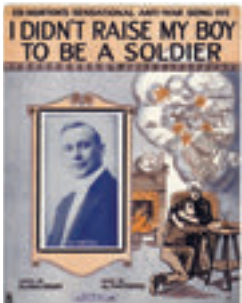
Ticket includes free admission to Greenwich Faces the Great War in the Storehouse Gallery.



Photo courtesy: F. Trubee Davison Papers, Yale University

Over Here and Over There: The Popular Music of WWI

From snappy marches to paeans to patriotism, music greatly influenced popular opinion before and during America's entry into WWI. Lyrics and sheet music graphics were often consciously designed to influence public opinion, and as the political climate shifted from neutrality to support for the Allies, so did the tone of mainstream music. Prior to



U.S. involvement in 1917, more than one song invoked a mother's love as reason enough to remain at home. After 1917, when the United States officially joined the conflict in Europe, patriotic themes held sway and served as propaganda both here and abroad.

Led by Stefanie Kies, performers will include vocalists Peggy De La Cruz and Bill Kies, Dan Swartz (vocals and guitar) and John Goldschmid on piano. Says Stefanie Kies,

"We'll explore the subjects of specific songs. Some will be familiar to your ear, while others may surprise you with their stories. In either case, be prepared to sing a few songs yourself! We'll honor the 'sing-along' (a venerated institution of the time) as we intend to honor the world-changing era of WWI."

Thursday, February 26, 2015, 7:00 pm and Sunday, March 1, 2015, 4:00 pm
Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15

Ticket includes free admission to Greenwich Faces the Great War in the Storehouse Gallery.

Share Your Version of History in the Spring 2015 Exhibition!

The Historical Society is planning a very special new exhibition in celebration of Greenwich's 375th birthday, and you can take part in it. We are inviting residents to reflect on and answer questions about Greenwich in 2015. Conceptual artists Karina Skvirsky and Liselot van der Heijden will record the answers and edit the myriad anonymous voices into five different audio programs representing five historic communities. When the exhibition opens, visitors will be able to come to the Storehouse Gallery and listen to how their neighbors from all over town describe the experience of living in Greenwich today. All of the recordings (including those not used for the five programs) will become part of the Archives of the Greenwich Historical Society, so when Greenwich celebrates its 400th birthday, future listeners will be able to hear firsthand what issues and themes were foremost in the thoughts of their counterparts in 2015.

We'd like to hear your voice. If you would like to take part in this historic exhibition, please contact Karen Frederick, Curator and Exhibition Coordinator, at curator@greenwichhistory.org, or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 22 to set up an interview.

Cherry Cottage Documentary Film Screening

*From Native Americans to hippies—
a story of America as told by a single house*

When Hans and Kate Morris began restoring the 1782 Cherry Cottage on their property in Stockbridge, Mass., they found themselves in a tangle of stories well worth unraveling—and telling. Using their research and the restoration of the historic home as a backdrop, they partnered with documentary filmmaker Dave Simonds to tell a tale



Cherry Cottage, circa 1900

of America, drawing on a cast of characters associated with the house across two centuries—many with surprising connections to significant moments in American history. The result is *Cherry Cottage: The Story of an American House*, a highly personal cinematic adventure.

After the 77-minute screening, the Morrises—Hans, who did the original research on the history of the house and its inhabitants, and Kate, who supervised the restoration and searched out period furnishings—will be on hand with director Dave Simonds to take questions from the audience and shed light on the back story of the film's creation—both as a labor of love and a testament to preservation. *Cherry Cottage* has played to sellout crowds at major film festivals and was also screened at the Nantucket Preservation Trust and at the National Trust for Historic Preservation Past Forward Conference in Savannah.

Film producer and narrator Hans is the son of Jack and Lu Morris, dedicated members of the Historical Society. Jack served as chairman of our Landmarks Recognition Program in 2013 and 2014. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Sunday, February 8, 2015, 3:30 to 6:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15

Wine, other refreshments and light bites will be served.



Hans Morris

Spotlight on Education

Each year the Greenwich Historical Society hosts thousands of students and their teachers at Bush-Holley Historic Site. Our interactive, inquiry-based programs provide the opportunity to creatively explore topics and sharpen critical thinking skills. Each is designed to complement classroom activities and offers young visitors a memorable day of fun and discovery. Topics run the gamut from Colonial American history, to slavery in the North, to the Industrial Age and the development of American Impressionism.

Claire Haft recently accompanied son Louis when his Parkway School class visited for a program called “Life in Colonial New England.” Designed for grades K through 2, the program focuses on how colonists lived, worked and entertained themselves. Claire was so inspired that she shared her impressions with us:



Claire and Louis

“It is such a gift to have a resource like the Bush-Holley House in our community. As our children have grown, we’ve followed this little house throughout the seasons—from Christmas, to school field trips, to the weekend family events and summer camp. It’s such a wonderful way to weave a sense of community history into our family’s daily life. We are lucky to have Bush-Holley House!”

We couldn’t agree more. If you would like to make a donation in support of our education programs, please contact Katrina Dorsey at kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org or 203-869-6899, Ext. 15. To learn more about our education programs, visit www.greenwichhistory.org/school.php.

Join the Green Team

We are seeking volunteers to join the Green Team, a volunteer group who assists with the planting and maintenance of Bush-Holley Historic Site’s gardens. The heirloom vegetable garden is planted each year based on a journal kept by the artist Elmer MacRae during the early 1900s when the house was the center of the Cos Cob Colony. Elmer married Constant Holley in 1900, and together they maintained (and documented) the garden for their family table as well as for guests of the Holley Boarding House. MacRae’s journal entries have left us a perfect vehicle for interpretation of our bucolic historic landscape.

The Green Team provides a wonderful opportunity for beginners, master gardeners, scout troops and garden club members who seek a meaningful, hands-on project. Additional perks include sharing in the garden’s bounty, recognition in our annual report and an invitation to the annual volunteer reception.

For more information, please contact Michele Couture, Director of Operations and Visitor Services, at mcouture@greenwichhistory.org or 203-869-6899, Ext. 20.



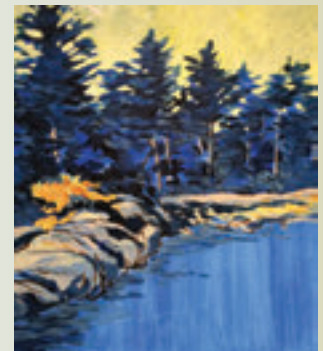
Fall Festival Winners? Everyone!



Over 300 people enjoyed this year’s Fall Festival, which included music by Too Blue, crafts, games, great food, a demonstration of homing pigeons by Joe Greco and a Scarecrow Contest with over 25 participants. Creators Marcella Kapsaroff and family captured the Grand Prize. Additional winners included the Oellrich Family for “Most Traditional,” the Hopson Family for “Scariest,” the DiCarlo Family for “Most Patriotic,” and Ella Ehrlich and family for “Most Whimsical.” Thanks to Rep. Fred Camillo; Brenda Curcio, Vice President, Deposit Operations for event sponsor First Bank of Greenwich; and designer Suzanne Martin for taking on the tough job of judging these fantastic figures, whose wardrobes and accessories were kindly donated by the Rummage Room. Thanks also to Sam Bridge Nurseries for the hayrides, to Ann’s Hobby Center, Graham’s, Maker Bot, Smart Kids Toys and Tegu for donating prizes, and to Black Forest Bakery, DiMare’s Bakery, Sweet Lisa’s Exquisite Cakes and Whole Foods Greenwich for keeping us all well fed.

Generously sponsored by: **THE FIRST BANK OF GREENWICH**

Hazel Jarvis took the blue ribbon in the “Artist” category in our Fall Festival Scarecrow Contest and won a one-woman show at the offices of event sponsor First Bank of Greenwich. Down East by Southwest will run through January 2015.



The third in a series of essays featured in conjunction with Greenwich Faces the Great War

Col. J. Alden Twachtman: Artist as Soldier

By Karin J. Crooks, Volunteer Researcher

In spring 1914, the future shone for John Alden Twachtman (1882–1974), eldest child of American Impressionist and nucleus of the Cos Cob art colony, John Henry Twachtman (1853–1902). Wealthy patrons nationwide increasingly commissioned architectural murals from this Yale School of Fine Arts graduate who had studied architecture at L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Returning to Greenwich in 1911 to build a small home for his family atop his mother’s Round Hill Road property, Alden co-founded the Greenwich Society of Artists in 1912, the Greenwich Riding Association in 1913 and the Greenwich Bird Protective Society in 1914.

Alden’s mother Martha was traveling in France just before the Great War was ignited on June 28. Shock from Germany’s invasion of Belgium and horror from its army’s treatment of Belgian and French civilians and destruction of their cultural treasures immediately arose amongst the Greenwich artists who had lived and studied there over the past decades, including the Twachtman family. By October 1914, the War’s shadow loomed, as Alden’s wife Louise wrote in her diary, “We are going to have a baby in March! ... And Eric [their eldest] is strong and very happy. There is only the horror of the War hovering over us...”

In February 1916, risking his regular income stream, Alden enlisted as a private in the Connecticut National Guard, Battery F, 10th Military Field Artillery, a unit composed of mainly Greenwich men. This was not his first military experience. Like many Yale students stirred by the Spanish-American War, Alden served with the C.N.G. from 1898 to 1900. Even earlier, growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio, until age seven, Alden was exposed to tales of the Civil War. Alden’s immigrant grandfather,



Twachtman in 1913, wearing riding clothes (photograph from private collection) and in 1919 wearing army uniform.

Christian Twachtman, trained in the German military, served in a local militia during the Civil War defending the German sector from the Confederate troops on Cincinnati’s doorstep. Christian had raised his family along Washington Park, where city troops drilled and German emigrants strongly supported the Union cause. Ironically, in 1917, Alden would be fighting against his father’s own German kinfolk.

In preparation for a Mexican war, Battery F was called into service in June 1916, and Alden was appointed a second lieutenant, commencing his rapid rise in the officer ranks. After training in Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, he was made captain of Batteries E and F before embarking for El Paso, Texas. Popular and resourceful, Alden would draw on his architectural skills to train his men



(Above) The Twachtman home on Round Hill Road, circa 1970, courtesy of James B. Baker. (Right) Louise Twachtman (wearing Twachtman’s tag) on house steps with her two sons, 1918. From the collection of Arthur P. Twachtman, Historical Society Archives.





Logo of Yankee Division and 103rd Field Artillery Regiment in which Twachtman served.

in superior artillery speed and accuracy, on his expert horsemanship to manage the transportation of artillery and on his rich cultural background to keep the men entertained in down times.

Soon after returning from Mexico, Alden's batteries were drafted into service for the Great War, and in August 1917, absorbed into the 103rd Field Artillery regiment (the only "heavy artillery" unit) of the new 26th ("Yankee") Division of the American Expeditionary Forces, composed entirely of National Guard units from New England. After further training in 155 mm howitzers at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Alden was promoted to the rank of major as commanding officer, third battalion, September 1917, before embarking for Coëtquidan, France. There the 103rd F.A. trained with French troops, and he wrote to his mother Martha, "I cannot tell you how strange it feels to be over here in your France near places we have been in, to be an army officer this time with 500 men under me and artillery of immense strength... It is my right and duty as an American... to be in this fight, the greatest crusade this mind could imagine..." With like spirit, Louise had bid farewell to

Go—and my heart goes with you

To fight on the fields of France

It's the only way I can enter the fray

You shall carry my will as your lance.

Go—and I shall not falter

When you join in the grim advance

And God give me grit to do my bit

**At home—while my heart's
in France.**

Poem by Louise Twachtman for Alden, October 15, 1917 entry from the diary of Louise Twachtman, collection of Eric and Sally Twachtman.

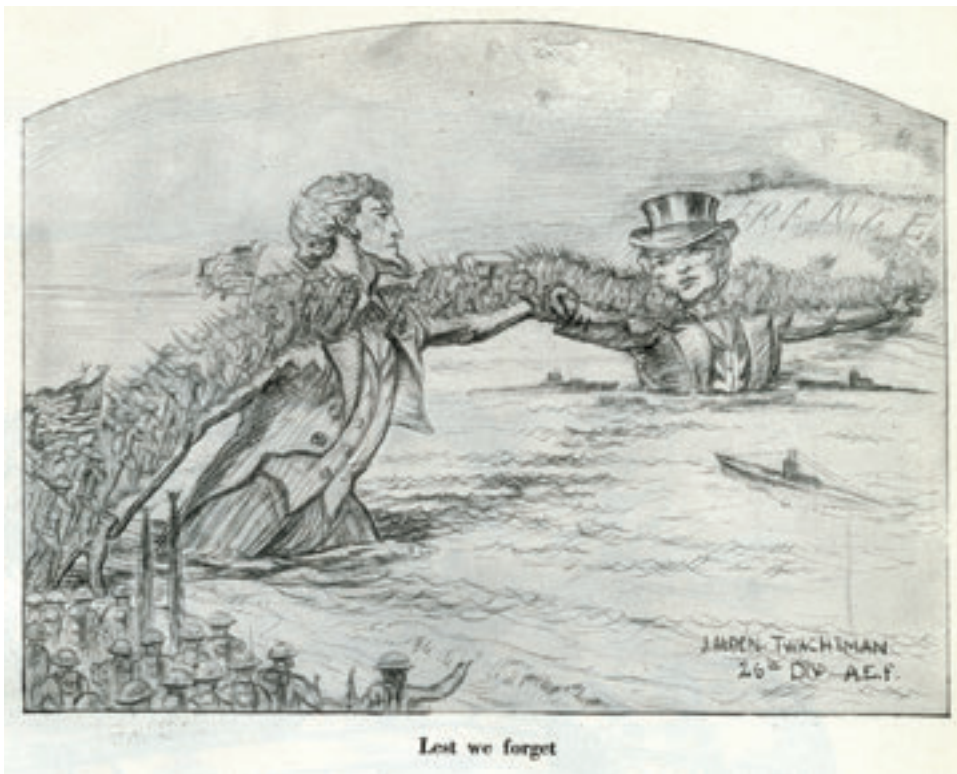
him on October 8: "...we saw them off from the Boxford station — Alden stood on the platform of the rear car. He looked superb — Pride dried the tears in my heart before they reached my eyes." She would wear his dog tags from captain rank around her neck on a satin ribbon until he returned.

As the 103rd F.A. slogged through engagements in the tiny sector of the Western Front where the A.E.F. fought from February to November 11, 1918, Alden rose to full colonel and earned a division citation of gallantry for his courage during the Chateau-Thierry drive as well as the Army's Distinguished Service Medal for his "courage, marked ability and leadership qualities... [rendering] maximum support to the infantry to which he was attached, thereby contributing in a large measure to their successes" in the Aisne-Marne, St.-Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives. In April 1919, Col. Twachtman returned to Greenwich, his family and his profession as architect and artist.

Our deep appreciation goes to essayist Karin Crooks for producing this article and for her tireless efforts in support of Greenwich Faces the Great War.

A longer version of this essay will be available on line at www.greenwichhistory.org.

Sketch by Col. J. Alden Twachtman, entitled "Lest We Forget," printed in Life Magazine, 1922.



Lest we forget

Save the Dates:

Now through March 22, 2015

Greenwich Faces the Great War Exhibition

January 15

*After the World Broke in Two:
WWI and the Fracturing of Poetry and Fiction*
Lecture by Professor Laura Winters

January 29

The Millionaires' Unit Screening

February 8

Cherry Cottage Screening

February 26 and March 1

Over Here and Over There Music Performances

news

Thanks to All for Making Antiquarius a Resounding Success

The Greenwich Historical Society board and staff would like to recognize and thank everyone who helped to make this crucial annual fundraiser such a resounding success. Our sincere gratitude goes to those who welcomed us into their beautiful homes, to our generous patrons and sponsors, to Markham Roberts for his gracious appearance, to our tireless and talented event co-chairs, to our dedicated and hardworking volunteers and to all who



attended the Greenwich Winter Antiques Show Opening Gala, who purchased Holiday House Tour tickets and who shopped at the Holiday Boutique. Without each and every one of you, this event would not have been possible!

Gala Co-chairs Lisa McAtee and Carrie Wallack with "Mother Ginger" at the Opening Gala

Special thanks to the following corporate sponsors who supported us so generously:



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