

Greenwich Historical Society

Explore our colorful past



news+programs

september | october 2014

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

Closed Monday and Tuesday

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
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Cos Cob, CT 06807
203-869-6899
www.greenwichhistory.org

DIRECTIONS

Off I-95 at exit 4. Visit
www.greenwichhistory.org
for details.



For all Americans, The Great War, which began in 1914, marked the beginning of modern nation states, modern warfare technology and the emergence of the United States as an international power. We still live with many of the policies stemming from that shattering event—issues such as profiling, debt ceilings and the difficulty and responsibility of dealing with humanitarian crises outside of our borders. Commemorating the centennial of the onset of World War I in Europe, the Greenwich Historical Society will launch a multifaceted project beginning with an exhibition mounted in the Storehouse Gallery from October 1, 2014 to March 22, 2015. Compelling images, artifacts and documents will illustrate the diverse experiences of military personnel, volunteers and civilians alike. For the first time in the Storehouse Gallery, touch-screen technology will be used to expand the visitor experience through supplementary shared audio and visual resources including personal remembrances, photographs, newspaper reports, wartime letters, journals, popular songs and more.

Greenwich Faces The Great War will also extend

to a special tour and temporary installation in Bush-Holley House to demonstrate how Greenwich inhabitants supported the war effort at home, including a World War I-period patriotic home vegetable garden (on view during the 2014 growing season). Online resources for educators and students and a menu of public events featuring lectures, workshops and performances will round out the program.

During America's war years, events taking place thousands of miles away in Europe changed everyday life for Greenwich residents in various and often unexpected ways. The impact was most profound on men of military service age, but it extended to all members of the community—from what they ate and what they grew in their gardens to the daily activities they pursued or shunned. Distant events even colored how certain individuals were perceived within the community. From the discourse preceding the war to the actions and influence of its citizens once engaged, Greenwich provides rich material and multiple perspectives on a conflict that, to this day, influences international politics and continues to shape history.

The project was supported by planning and public presentation grants from Connecticut Humanities, by an internship funded by the Yale Alumni Association of Greenwich and by gifts from the Greenwich Historical Society's Annual Fund Campaign and the WWI Exhibition Patrons Council.

October 1, 2014–March 22, 2015

Exhibition hours: noon to 4:00 pm, Wednesday through Sunday.

Storehouse Gallery

Admission: Free to members. \$10 for adults; \$8 for students and seniors. Admission is free to the public the first Wednesday of each month.

Sponsored in part by:

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Member,

Our fall and winter exhibition, public programs and online resources created for *Greenwich Faces The Great War* invite you to meet a wide range of people from our town's past and consider how they responded to the first World War, known at the time as "The Great War." These people from Greenwich's past included financiers, industrialists, socialists and peace activists, American isolationists, Francophile artists and culture lovers, Germans and German-Americans who suffered discrimination during the war years, recent immigrants (especially those from eastern and central Europe), women who assumed new jobs and new roles during the war and youth who also participated in community service. The Historical Society staff worked with guest curator Kathleen Egan and community volunteers to integrate the latest scholarship on the subject and to examine hotly debated issues from the time—many controversial to this day. Should America send its sons to fight and die overseas? What is the proper balance between freedom of expression and national security? Many of the historical resources mined for this project have rarely been seen or heard, and the stories they tell will encourage site and virtual visitors to think differently about America then and now. I urge you to visit this fascinating exhibition on what has often been called the forgotten war and to check out the new section of this newsletter that is designed to explore exhibition-related stories in more depth.

Debra Mecky, *Executive Director*



Lecturer
Kathleen Hulser

Kathleen Hulser: Sympathy and Suspicion in WWI Greenwich

Historian Kathleen Hulser will explore how World War I plunged small towns across the country into global affairs and how Greenwich, with its art colony connections in France, its captains of industry and its immigrant communities, was uniquely poised to be caught up in the march. In Greenwich, America's early declaration of neutrality did not translate to inaction, but manifested itself in debate, establishment of humanitarian enterprises and military preparedness initiatives. When war was declared, propaganda and the resulting suspicion and profiling of aliens became counterpoints to pep rallies and bond drives. With these influences and the changes that war brought to the daily lives of Greenwich citizens, by the end of the conflict, residents came to see themselves as part of a new world order.

Kathleen Hulser was public historian at the New York Historical Society from 1999 to 2011. Her current exhibition is *The Volunteers: Americans Join World War I, 1914-1919*, opening in October 2014 at the National World War I Museum. She teaches history and American studies at The New School and at Pace University in New York and creates public history and digital humanities projects.

Hulser attended McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where she studied philosophy and political science, and the Université de Strasbourg in France. After her BA, she earned an MA in American history at New York University.

Thursday, October 9, 2014

7:00–8:00 pm followed by short Q&A

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$15; nonmembers: \$20.

For tickets, visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 10.



Upcoming Story Barn: "Victory!"

Story Barn is a unique way to experience oral tradition, explore local lore and get a whole new perspective on the inner lives of your friends and neighbors. Each performer tells a five-minute story (without notes) based on a true personal experience. In conjunction with the town-wide reading program Greenwich Reads Together, the Greenwich Historical Society will host a Story Barn based on the concept of victory. Storytellers will focus on tales of teamwork, perseverance and overcoming adversity—themes woven throughout *The Boys in the Boat*, this year's selection for Greenwich Reads Together.

Get ready for an evening of standup, standout stories straight from the heart, emceed by comedienne extraordinaire Bonnie Levison. If you would like to tell your own story or know anyone who can spin a great yarn, please contact Anna Greco at agreco@greenwichhistory.org.

Friday, October 17, 2014

Doors open at 6:30;
show begins at 7:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$15; nonmembers: \$20.

Admission includes beer, wine and snacks.

For tickets, visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 10.



A great big "Thank You" to...

JJ Cassone Bakery for contributing 25 loaves of delicious Italian bread for our *Festa Al Fresco* event.

Interning at Greenwich Historical Society

Intern Morgan Fenton, a 2014 graduate of Darien High School, writes about her interning experience last spring:

During my internship, I shadowed several school tours. As a history buff, I was excited to see that so many young children showed genuine interest in the stories connected with Bush-Holley House, and I was continually impressed by what they wanted to know (or what they already knew) about their town's history.

Third graders from Brunswick School learned about Sarah Bush's life during the "Sarah and Her Town" tour, and everyone would laugh about the commode in the master bedroom and the fact that the youngest child in the family was responsible for emptying it each day. Second graders from Hamilton Avenue Magnet School learned about Impressionist art and the Cos Cob art colony. Many agreed that Child Hassam did have "the best room ever" when they visited the "Best Bedroom," where Hassam stayed and painted during his visits to the Holley Boarding House.

Knowing where you come from is such an important part of discovering who you will become. I truly believe that the Greenwich Historical Society is supporting the children of the community by helping them appreciate history from a young age.



Morgan Fenton pictured at her Darien High School Intern Fair Booth.

83rd Annual Meeting to Feature Author Robert K. Massie



Photo: Alex Remnick

Immediately following the opening reception and the Executive Director's annual report on the past year's activities, this year's speaker will be distinguished Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and author Robert K. Massie, who will present a lecture entitled "Reflections on the Centennial of World War I: Lessons Learned and Not Learned."

Robert K. Massie was born in Lexington, Kentucky, and studied American history at Yale and European history at Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar. He was president of the Authors Guild from 1987 to 1991. His books include *Nicholas and Alexandra*; *Peter the Great: His Life and World* (for which he won a Pulitzer Prize for biography); *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter*;

Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War; *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea*; and *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman*. Do not miss this unique opportunity to hear one of the great storytellers of our time. Guests will have the opportunity to pose questions after the lecture.

Thursday, September 25, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Reception at 6:00 pm; Program at 6:30 pm

Belle Haven Club

100 Harbor Drive, Greenwich, CT

Members: \$35; nonmembers: \$40. Reservations required. Visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 14

This event has been generously underwritten by Edith and Roy B. Simpson.

Fall Festival and Scarecrow Competition at Greenwich Historical Society

This traditional fall festival will feature a scarecrow-making competition, a hayride through the town's newest

Historic District, compliments of Sam Bridge Nursery, and, in keeping with the World War I theme of the Historical Society's fall exhibition

Greenwich Faces The Great War, will include family-friendly tours of Bush-Holley House, currently interpreted as it would have been during the WWI years. Themed activities will include an espionage game for the whole family and crafts that focus on vintage airplanes and poppies. There will also be music by popular bluegrass/swing band Too Blue from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

Feeling creative? For a \$15 entry fee (\$10 for members) the Historical Society will supply everything you need to make a scarecrow, including armature ("the bones"), hay for stuffing, twine and a

burlap sack for the head. Bring your own clothing and "accessories" to customize your creation. Prizes will be supplied by



Cos Cob TV & Audio, Ann's Hobby Center and Smart Kids' Toys. Advance registration for the Scarecrow Competition is required.

Price of general admission includes free entry to the Storehouse Gallery exhibition, *Greenwich Faces The Great War*.

Sunday, October 12, 2014, 12:30 to 3:30 pm

General admission: \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Family admission: \$25. Refreshments included in admission. No charge for children 2 and under.

Scarecrow Competition: \$15 entry fee; \$10 for Historical Society members. Advance registration required. Visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 10.

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

Save the Dates:

September 25

83rd Annual Meeting and Lecture by Robert K. Massie

October 1, 2014 to March 22, 2015

Greenwich Faces The Great War Exhibition
Members' Preview: September 30

October 9

Sympathy and Suspicion in WWI Greenwich
Lecture by Kathleen Hulser

October 12

Fall Festival and Scarecrow Competition

October 17

Story Barn: *Victory!*

news

New Members Appointed to Board

We are delighted to welcome three new board members, all with stellar records in community service and the arts.



Bea Crumbine

Bea Crumbine has served on the Advisory Council and spearheaded community relations for our highly successful exhibition *From Italy to America*. She also currently serves as Ambassador-at-Large for the Town of Greenwich with a special focus on creating historic town ceremonies.

Tiffany Burnette became involved with the Greenwich Historical Society through its collaboration with the Bruce Museum on the Greenwich

Winter Antiques Show in 2012 and continued her involvement as a member of the 2013 Antiquarius Steering Committee. She will co-chair this year's Antiquarius Designer Luncheon.



Reba Williams

Reba Williams first became involved with the Historical Society when she and husband Dave shared a collection of fine art prints by American artists that resulted in the exhibition *From Harbor to Haven*. Reba has served on the Advisory Council and was instrumental in the acquisition of Toby's Tavern.

Each new member brings a wealth of business, arts and philanthropic experience to our board, and we are very grateful for their willingness to share their time, experience and counsel.



Tiffany Burnette

Grateful for Grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation

Of the many visitors to CT Open House Day at the Greenwich Historical Society this June, at least two young visitors from Hamilton Avenue Magnet School already knew their way around Bush-Holley Historic Site and were eager to provide tours for their families. They were some of the 286 students from Hamilton Avenue Magnet School who visited the Greenwich Historical Society as a result of a grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation (FCCF) in support of the Hamilton Avenue School-Museum partnership. This year's grant of \$5,000 awarded to the Greenwich Historical Society by the FCCF in June will continue to defray the cost of Hamilton Avenue student visits to the Historical Society during the 2014/15 school year.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds or contribute to existing funds. The Foundation also provides philanthropic advisory services, and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded \$168 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond.

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

Samuel F. Pryor Faces The Great War

By Karin J. Crooks, Volunteer Researcher



Portrait of Samuel F. Pryor, circa 1920, private collection.

In September 1913 a quiet, unassuming businessman, Samuel (Sam) Frazier Pryor (1865-1934), arrived in Greenwich to start a new career, uprooting his family from their life near St. Louis, Missouri. At 48, Sam Pryor was a self-made man who, after high school, had worked his way up through the railroad supply business to become president of Southern Wheel Company. Sam's new employer, the family of William Rockefeller (1841-1922), was already established in Greenwich and famous worldwide for its wealth. In his new position as General Manager and Vice President of Remington Arms-Union Metallic Cartridges Co. (Remington), Sam would report to two bosses: William's second son, Percy A. Rockefeller (1878-1934), the young head of the family business; and William's son-in-law, Marcellus (Marcy) Hartley Dodge (1888-1963), the sole stockholder of Remington. Sam then hired the architectural firm of Cross & Cross to design his new Greenwich home, The Pryory, on Field Point Circle.

On June 28, 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand began The Great War (WWI). It also upended Sam Pryor's new life in Greenwich, as it did for many other Greenwich residents. The war impacted Sam's employer immediately. First, the New York Stock Exchange closed its doors on July 31. Marcy and his wife were stranded while traveling in Europe. Fall of 1914 brought orders to Remington from the Allies for millions of rifles and ammunition. Sam's business acumen and energy drove the expansion of the Remington factories in 1915 from an old-line company of well-crafted sporting guns to a modern manufacturer of military arms, with over five plants in five states. The scope of this increase in capacity—in size of plants and in the speed with which they were built and staffed—understandably was viewed by the press as “Aladdin's Palace,” the luxurious Bridgeport plant which rose out of thin air, and as “Pryor's Master Stroke.”

The German ambassador to America, Count Johann von Bernstorff, had been ordered to use all means to prevent American munitions from reaching the Allies. In the

battle for the heart of America and public opinion, the suave and sophisticated Count von Bernstorff and his agents frequently employed public slander to garner American support by attacking American munitions makers. When von Bernstorff charged that Remington was supplying “dum-dum” bul-

Count Johann von Bernstorff, German Ambassador to America, circa 1914.



Remington-U.M.C. Rifle Works plant, Bridgeport, CT, June, 1918. Courtesy of Remington Society Archives, Roy Marcot, Archivist





Group photo of the family of William Rockefeller, circa 1918, Rockefeller Archives Center. William Rockefeller in middle row, far left; Percy A. Rockefeller and William G. Rockefeller (sons of WR) in back row, far left; Geraldine Dodge (daughter of WR) in middle row, fifth from right; Marcellus Hartley Dodge (husband of Geraldine) in back row, second from right.

lets to the English (which would have been in contravention of international law), Sam responded by letter to the Count, published in *The New York Times* on December 15, 1914, vigorously denying the Count's allegation and demanding that he retract it or come to Remington headquarters to see the proof for himself.

The battle was also fought with pure cash. In June 1915, Sam was called upon to deny possible sales of Remington arms to the Germans, based on an offer from a von Bernstorff agent to buy the company for \$15,000,000. Sam Pryor's most famous published statement, to be repeated in his obituary, assured the American public that the American arms business was not to be bought out by foreign parties: "No sum that might be offered would tempt this company to sell out and repudiate existing contracts."

A third battle was fought for the loyalty of Remington's workers, as von Bernstorff's agents fomented strikes in various factories along the East Coast by bribing local union members. Sam's management of Remington was tested most greatly by a strike

"The Pryory," built on Field Point Circle for Samuel F. Pryor. Photo circa 1986, Greenwich Historical Society Library & Archives.

threatened at the Bridgeport plant under suspicious circumstances in July 1915. Had this strike spread to the other New England munitions plants, it would have dealt a most serious blow to the Allies.

In 1916, there were new challenges to Remington. Explosions of munitions contin-

ued, topped by one in June at Tom's Island in New York Harbor, breaking windows as far north as Wall Street, where Remington's offices were located. Most challenging, the Allied buyers kept changing their order specifications for rifles, causing backups, overruns and financial losses. At the end of 1916, control of Remington was reorganized and shifted from the owner, Marcy, to the lenders, controlled by Percy. Sam Pryor was made Chairman of the Executive Committee of Remington, a position he held until 1931.

By the end of the war, Remington Arms had produced over 50% of all American rifles used by US troops; its affiliate, Union Metallic Cartridges Co., had produced over 50% of all small arms ammunition used by the US or the Allies during the war. Locally, Sam served as treasurer of the Greenwich Home Gardens Association, organizers of the town's major food drive for the war.

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.

For an expanded version of this article with footnotes and the author's sources and credits, visit www.greenwichhistory.org.

