

Greenwich Historical Society

Explore our colorful past



news+programs

march | april 2018

GREENWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is dedicated to promoting Greenwich's unique and colorful past. Our collections 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 21 world-class museums and historic sites across the state. Discover collections rich in New England history and culture and view artwork from one of the earliest American Impressionist art colonies.

HOURS

Storehouse Gallery

Through April 15:

Open Wednesday through Sunday, 12–4 pm

Docent-led Tours of Bush-Holley House

Wednesday through Sunday at 1, 2 and 3 pm and by appointment

Gallery and Group Tours

Arranged upon request.

Contact agrec0@greenwichhistory.org

Library & Archives

Wednesdays, 10 am–12:30 pm

and 1–4 pm, or by appointment

Contact cshields@greenwichhistory.org

ADMISSION

\$10 for adults

\$8 for seniors and students

Always free to members and children under 18.

Free to all visitors the first Wednesday of each month.

CONTACT US

Greenwich Historical Society

39 Strickland Road

Cos Cob, CT 06807

203-869-6899

www.greenwichhistory.org/contact

DIRECTIONS

Off I-95 at Exit 4.

Details at www.greenwichhistory.org/visit



Rightful Heritage: An Evening with Presidential Historian Douglas Brinkley

Greenwich Historical Society will welcome author and CNN Presidential Historian Douglas Brinkley for an

intimate book signing, dinner and lecture sponsored by Northern Trust on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 6:30 pm. Brinkley is a sought-after commentator on U.S. presidential history and an author of best-selling books on Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. A prolific writer, Brinkley has also covered subjects ranging from war to our environmental legacy.

Brinkley's talk, "A Timely Tale in an Age of Political Turmoil on the Role of Capitalism and Environmentalism," will include a discussion of his latest book, *Rightful Heritage*, which examines the fundamental tension between economic growth and environmental stewardship. He will also explore the story of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps, an endeavor de-

signed to combat severe unemployment during the Great Depression that also resulted in the preservation of thousands of acres of wilderness.

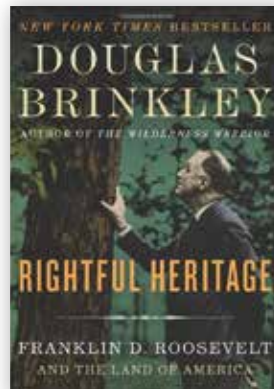
David Brinkley holds a doctorate from Georgetown University in U.S. Diplomatic History. He is currently a professor of history at Rice University, a contributing editor for *Vanity Fair* and a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker* and *Atlantic Monthly*.

Limited seating is available for this extraordinary opportunity to hear from a respected authority CNN has called "a man who knows more

about the presidency than any human being alive." All proceeds will go to our Fund for Program Enrichment.

Tickets go on sale March 12 at greenwichhistory.org.

Underwriting opportunities for VIP access are available. Please email Director of Development Katrina Dorsey at kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org for more information.



Catch the Exhibition Before It Closes on April 15

An American Odyssey:

The Jewish Experience
in Greenwich



Afternoon Nosh at the Greenwich Historical Society



Andrew Harris, Slate

SPONSORED BY



One of the best ways to learn about a culture is to enjoy good food and conversation around a table. Jewish cuisine represents a diverse collection of traditions from around the world. It has evolved over many centuries, shaped by Jewish dietary laws (kashrut), festivals and Sabbath (Shabbat) traditions and also by the economics, agriculture and culinary traditions of the many countries where Jewish communities settled.

Our buffet-style lunch will feature a short presentation by Curator of Education Anna Greco. A chef from Garelick & Herbs will talk about the origins of the items on the menu* along with their

cultural or religious significance and tips on how to make them. Guests will have the opportunity to sample a variety of traditional Jewish dishes from latkes (potato pancakes) to hamantaschen (triangle-shaped cookies with jam filling). Israeli wine will also be available for tasting.

Sunday, March 25, 12:30 to 2:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Members: \$30; nonmembers \$45

The fee for this program will also grant access to the exhibition, open 12:00 to 4:00 pm that day.

* Dairy and meat are present in this menu but not in the same dish. If guests have specific dietary concerns, they should call ahead.

Dear Mom and Dad

Dramatic Reading in Conjunction with *An American Odyssey*

First performed at the Museum of American Jewish Military History, *Dear Mom and Dad* honors the life and service of Herb Rosencrans, the firstborn American son of immigrants, and the bond between two mothers whose sons served during WWII. Only one son will come home. Eva Rosencrans and Marjorie Wylie represent mothers who prayed every day for the end of the war.

This dramatic reading is based on the letters that Herb sent home during his service that tell of a young college boy who left academia to serve his country and ended up making the ultimate sacrifice. The project honors all of the young men and women who served their country and focuses on the efforts of one with Jewish heritage.

The program is offered in conjunction with the current exhibition, *An American Odyssey: the Jewish Experience in Greenwich*. The Storehouse Gallery, where the WWII uniform of Isadore Pinkert and the dog tags of Captain Archibald Tunick and Carl Bennett are on display, will be open an hour before the performance.

The hour-long dramatic reading will be followed by a conversation led by program creator Catherine Ladnier, a graduate of



Herb Rosencrans' Silver Star, Combat Infantryman Badge and Purple Heart Medal

Mills College and Harvard University and a confirmed theater junkie. Her discovery of letters and ephemera connected with her

family's WWII experiences led to the creation of the play *Dear Eva*, based on her mother's war-era experiences. Additional letters and stories shared by others over the years have encouraged her to add to her repertoire.

Two performances at Vanderbilt Education Center:

Tuesday, April 3

Gallery opens at 2:00 pm;
program starts at 3:00 pm

Thursday, April 5

Gallery opens at 6:00 pm;
program starts at 7:00 pm

Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15

Admission includes access to the exhibition, which will be open one hour prior to the program's start.

Visit our blog at greenwichhistory.org/blog and follow us on:



@GreenwichHistoricalSociety



@GrnHistCT



@greenwichhistory

HISTORIC INNOVATION CAMP

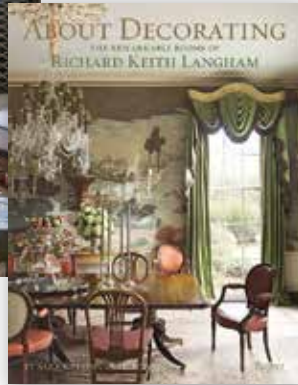
Don't miss the early-bird deadline for camp, April 1.

Registration on our website at greenwichhistory.org/camp



About Decorating

Luncheon, Lecture and Book Signing to Feature Celebrated Designer Richard Keith Langham



earned a degree from The Fashion Institute of Technology in interior design. Before launching his own firm, he apprenticed under the legendary Mark Hampton and honed his skills at Irvine & Fleming. His name has appeared on *Architectural Digest's* AD-100 as well as on *Elle Decor's* A List, and his work has appeared in publications too numerous to list. Add to that notable resume: Honorary Design Chair of Antiquarius 2017.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to hear firsthand the stories behind the unique and elegant homes featured in his luscious new book, *About Decorating: The Remarkable Rooms of Richard Keith Langham*.

Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 11:30 am

Belle Haven Club

Tickets: \$250, includes lecture, luncheon and book; \$500, includes lecture, luncheon, pre-signed book and Benefactor listing in program; \$1,000, includes lecture, luncheon, pre-signed book, Patron listing in program and seating at Richard Keith Langham's table

Visit greenwichhistory.com for reservations and sponsorship details.

SPONSORED BY FAIRFIELD COUNTY
LOOK

For the last 25 years, Alabama-born, Manhattan-based Richard Keith Langham has been creating elegant spaces for some of New York's most legendary ladies (think Mrs. William F. Buckley and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis). His pedigreed town and country homes, grounded in tradition and enlivened with a fresh and imaginative perspective, feature lush color and pattern, with a mixture of old and new, and are particularly characterized by couture details.

Langham studied at Parsons School of Design and London's Study Center for the History of Fine and Decorative Arts and

Landmarks Program to Recognize Six Historic Properties

This year, the Landmarks Recognition Program will celebrate the documentation and plaquing of four unique and historically significant Greenwich properties, including a dazzling mid-century design, two charming Tudors and a chateau worthy of French royalty. We also plan to present two Preservation Awards as part of our semiannual program that honors individuals, organizations and projects for their contributions to the preservation of Greenwich's historical resources.

The keynote speaker will be Anthony E. Malkin, chairman and CEO of Empire State Realty Trust, the real estate investment trust that owns the Empire State Building, as well as 18 other properties in New York City. Mr. Malkin's talk, "The Empire State Building: Preserving and Making History at the Same Time," will discuss the deftly researched and highly skilled restoration of the Empire State Building's lobby—one of the few interiors in New York to be designated a historic

landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. A team of experts worked for nearly two years to restore the aesthetic of the original 1930 design, including re-creating an ornate ceiling mural and historic glasswork while introducing a contemporary visitor processing system and employing state-of-the-art technology.

Mr. Malkin has been a leader in existing building energy efficiency retrofits through coordinating the team of Clinton Climate Initiative, Johnson Controls, JLL and Rocky Mountain Institute in a groundbreaking project at the Empire State Building (esbny.com). He is a board member of the Real Estate Roundtable and chair of its Sustainability Policy Advisory Committee, a member of the Urban Land Institute, member of the Board of Governors of the Real Estate Board of New York, member of the Partnership for New York City's Innovation Council, member of the Building Committee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, member of the Committee

Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, member of the Advisory Board of Mission Point Capital Partners and member of the Advisory Council of the Harvard Stem Cell Institute. Mr. Malkin received a bachelor's degree cum laude from Harvard College.



Keynote Speaker
Tony Malkin

A champagne reception will precede the program.

Sunday, April 29, 2018; 4:00 to 6:00 pm

Greenwich Country Club

Tickets: \$75 for individual; \$250 for Patron Level; \$500 for Benefactor Level

Visit www.greenwichhistory.org for reservations.

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39 Strickland Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807

Save the Dates:

March 8

Richard Keith Langham
Designer Luncheon

March 25

Afternoon Nosh

April 1

Deadline for Early-Bird Historic
Innovation Camp Registration

April 3 and April 5

Dear Mom and Dad

April 15

Last Day: *An American Odyssey:
The Jewish Experience in Greenwich*

April 18

An Evening with Douglas Brinkley

April 29

Landmarks Recognition Program

June 10

Family Frolic at French Farm

The Greenwich Historical Society chronicles the past, but the future is in your hands. Please remember us in your estate plan so that future generations may continue to explore the ongoing story of our community. Contact kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org.



news

Whirlwind Creative Previews Inaugural Exhibition Plans

Whirlwind Creative, a multidisciplinary studio specializing in the design and production of exhibits, video, interactives and multimedia, has been instrumental in helping us envision our new campus. Husband and wife team David Lackey and Terren Baker has been the creative force behind everything from the design of permanent signs and way-finding to the placement of interactive media applications throughout our new site. They led the design process for our new logo and will be responsible for creating our inaugural exhibitions. We thought you might be interested in hearing observations on the project.

“Our place in history evolves from childhood to adulthood. We live through different eras and connect to the past and future through the different generations, those that came before us and those that will follow. Viewing history

as a collective journey of continuity and change offers a wonderful opportunity to revisit the Historical Society’s collections and allows us to present artifacts, documents and stories in truly engaging ways.



David Lackey and Terren Baker

“In the new Permanent Gallery, our goal will be to reach an expanded audience using interpretive exhibits that tell the unique and fascinating story of Greenwich’s beginnings, Bush-Holley House, the Cos Cob art colony, its local

and national significance and some of the artists who put it on the map.

“The inaugural special exhibit, *History is...Alive in Greenwich: Seven Ways to Explore Your Stories and Ours*, will examine the many possible ways that history can be interpreted, employing objects and images from the Historical Society’s collection. Visitors will not only reflect on what they see, but consider their own role in history, and will be encouraged to think about how history plays a part in their own lives.

“The new campus project offers us all an unprecedented opportunity to interpret history in new ways, to showcase the Greenwich Historical Society’s remarkable resources and to help the organization play a vital role in the community as a relevant and forward-looking institution. We are so excited to participate in its reimagining during this pivotal time in its history.”

—David Lackey and Terren Baker

*Diane Fox, Chair
Greenwich
Preservation Network*



Hot Topic: Historic Preservation

Demolition of structures of historic value in Greenwich has become increasingly noticeable in recent years. In January 2015, not long after longtime Greenwich resident, former town planner and director of planning and zoning, and historic preservation proponent Diane Fox retired, she gathered a group of local leaders and, under the leadership of the Greenwich Historical Society, formed the Greenwich Preservation Network (GPN). We recently sat down with Diane to learn more about GPN and other local organizations involved in historic preservation.



*The Bridges School, Valley Road,
North Mianus*

“Members of the Greenwich Preservation Network are representatives of organizations in town concerned with preserving important historic and architectural resources and land areas. Member organizations include the Greenwich Historical Society, Greenwich Land Trust and Greenwich Preservation Trust; public sector bodies include the Greenwich Historic District Commission, the Architectural Review Committee, and the Conservation and Planning and Zoning departments. Along with other individuals who are conversant with architecture, preservation and zoning, our state representatives in Hartford are also members. It’s an entity that works together to focus on common issues and to support each other’s efforts,” Fox explains.

This cross-section of public/private volunteers meets quarterly to discuss pending threats to historical and architectural resources in town, to share information and to stay current with developments, laws and trends. Guest presenters have included the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and, most recently, a speaker who is heading up opposition in the State of Connecticut to the proposed new high-speed rail that will cross our state. Says Fox, “The project poses significant threats to properties in Old Greenwich, Riverside and downtown Greenwich along U.S. 1, I-95 and the railroad corridor.”

If the project is funded, the proposed new rail will require the mandatory taking of both residential and business properties—actual locations are shown on plans developed in Washington and the State of Connecticut.

“The network is not involved in politics,” Fox states, “but it partners with those who are working to find solutions to protect important town resources and history. We are a low-profile organization that works behind the scenes.” The group recently sent a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission in support of Town Planner Katie DeLuca’s proposal to amend Greenwich’s Historic Overlay Zone to provide more and better incentives to help builders and existing and potential property owners maintain and restore historic buildings. The plan calls for allowing additions or new structures on these properties to make them economically viable. “We may not be able to save hundreds of buildings, but we should be able to protect the most crucial,” says Fox.

Preservation may be a hard row to hoe in Greenwich, with many often believing it is more expeditious to tear down and rebuild without ever considering alternatives, but we have seen some bright lights of late. One is the preservation of the Feake-Ferris House, believed to be the original home of Elizabeth Feake, first settler in Greenwich. The home was preserved when builder and preservationist Chris Franco, with the support and input of representatives from the Greenwich

Preservation Network, approached the purchaser of the property and convinced him of its historical significance. Not only did the new owner agree to restore the home, but he will also be opening this newly discovered and important piece of Greenwich history to



*Gateway Garden and Concession Stand,
Greenwich Point*

the public once a year.

And there’s a financial incentive as well. The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation has done studies indicating that property values increase in historic districts because purchasers are assured that the streetscape they buy into will never be marred. In the past few years, Greenwich has also seen the establishment of the Stanwich Historic District and two new Historic Properties, preserved in perpetuity. (These properties do require a certificate of appropriateness if exteriors are altered, but interiors are only subject to standard building regulations.) Adaptive reuse is also alive and well as evidenced by some of the town’s restored, high-profile historic structures. The Greenwich Post Office (now Restoration Hardware), River House and the Bridges School are all stunning and prime examples, as are Greenwich Point Conservancy’s beautiful restorations of Innis Arden Cottage and the new concession stand at Greenwich Point.

As members of the Historical Society, we know you’re interested in preservation. Please help us spread the word.

Stay tuned for our next newsletter, where we will talk about what you can do to encourage preservation.

Historical Society Polls Community to Plan for the Future

In anticipation of opening our expanded campus in fall 2018 and as part of our current strategic planning process, the Historical Society implemented a community survey to better understand both members' and nonmembers' perceptions of what we do, their motivations for becoming involved and their wishes for future programs. The results will help set priorities so that, moving ahead, we will continue to respond to the

needs and interests of our diverse community.

A total of 323 people responded to the survey. Half were members or donors; 73% were female and 27% were male. Thirty-eight percent fell into the 65+ age group; the balance of the respondents, age group 45–54 and age group 55–64, split evenly at 21% each.

Here's what they think!



What are your motivations for membership/donating?

(Respondents could choose more than one.)

- 83%** Preserving town's history
- 65%** Architectural preservation
- 60%** History/Greenwich history
- 60%** Bush-Holley House
- 60%** Pride in Greenwich
- 60%** Educating schoolchildren
- 60%** Art/Art history

What are you very likely to attend?

(Respondents could choose more than one.)

- 50%** Exhibitions
- 42%** Lectures or other programs
- 35%** Antiquarius
- 32%** Walking tours of Greenwich

What do you see as top priorities for improvements?

(Respondents could choose more than one.)

- 19%** More exhibitions
- 15%** More architectural preservation
- 16%** Expand school programs, underserved populations
- 14%** More lectures
- 12%** Digitize the archives
- 9%** More family programs
- 9%** More programs on Bush-Holley House
- 6%** Workshops with social events, adults 35–50

Did You Know...

Although almost all of the Jews who settled in Greenwich came with the massive 20th-century migration, there were Jewish property owners in town as far back as Colonial times, including the owners of our own Bush-Holley House.

Beginning in 1728, three brothers from the Hays family, a prominent New York Jewish family originally hailing from Holland, were the second owners of the property upon which Bush-Holley House stands today. Grace Mears Levy, widow of Moses Levy, a member of New York's first Jewish community, Congregation Shearith Israel, married David Hays in 1735, the year he purchased the Bush-Holley House and property. Grace's connection with Greenwich was short lived. By 1736, the last Hays family member had sold the house and property.

Our current exhibition features a

reproduction of an oil portrait of Grace Mears Levy Hays, attributed to Gerardus Duyckinck (1695–1746), on loan from Ambassador John Loeb. The original hangs in the Museum of the City of New York.

While researching the Hays family and its connection with the painting, curator Ann Meyerson discovered through 18th-century correspondence that Grace's stepdaughter from her first marriage, Abigail Franks, despised her stepmother but came to feel more sympathetic toward her due to Grace's apparently unhappy marriage to Hays. In a letter* to her son, Naphtali Franks, on June 15, 1735, Abigail comments: "I bleive you think wee have abounded in wonderfull Marriages but Especialy david Hays and Mrs. Grace Levy Must be Something Surprising for my part I Shall hereafter think nothing Imposiable." Apparently, 18th-century family dynamics were no less complicated than they are today!



Grace Mears Levy, Attributed to Gerardus Duyckinck (1695–1746), Museum of the City of New York, 36.343.2

*Abigail Franks, June 15, 1735, *American Jewish Historical Society, Letters of the Franks Family (1733–1748)*