

Greenwich Historical Society Newsletter

GREENWICH 1931 • 2021 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
90
SPRING
2022

Spring Greetings from the Greenwich Historical Society



As we enter the third spring of a changed world, we are grateful to have shared and weathered the experience together as a

community, and to have served as a hub and beacon for gatherings, programs, events and information that continue to keep us all connected through this historic time of reflection, growth and transformation. We have much to look forward to over the coming months. Aligned with the ongoing celebration of our 90th anniversary milestone, we are excited to launch **Discover Greenwich**, a dynamic new series of interactive programs that promotes a sense of place where we live. Our annual **Shining A Light** lecture series is dedicated to amplifying underrepresented voices in local history, and our partnership with the **Witness Stones Project** and local Greenwich schools continues this year with a ceremony in May to honor the enslaved people who lived and worked at the Bush-Holley House. Taking inspiration from images of Constant Holley MacRae's floral designs, our **Artful Arrangements** master class series is the perfect way to embrace spring. **Tavern Garden Markets** resume every other Wednesday beginning in May, and a visit to the **Museum Store** to check out the latest arrivals of books, gifts and accessories is always a delight.

We look forward to seeing you on our campus!

Debra Mecky

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO



Shining A Light LECTURE SERIES

Our annual Shining A Light lecture series is dedicated to elevating and amplifying underrepresented voices in local history in order to highlight the stories, research and people who are dedicated to interpreting, restoring and preserving these histories.



March 24

THE WITNESS STONES PROJECT: RESTORING HISTORY, HONORING HUMANITY

with Dennis Culliton, Director and Co-Founder

Dennis Culliton will share the story behind the origins of the Witness Stones Project, detailing the initiative's historical recovery process. Learn about the extensive research process and primary source analysis involved in the project, and explore a series of original documents from the Greenwich area which illuminate the economic and legal framework that supported slavery.



April 7

BRIDGEPORT'S LITTLE LIBERIA: THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

with Maisa L. Tisdale, President and CEO of The Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community

Little Liberia was a seafaring community of free people of color. The Mary and Eliza Freeman Houses are the last extant examples of that community, and are on the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to African Americans and women. Maisa Tisdale will detail the story of Little Liberia and share the expansion of ongoing efforts to restore and preserve this historic community.



April 21

THE DISEASED SHIP: A TALE OF NEW ENGLAND'S TWIN PLAGUES

with Dr. Meadow Dibble, Executive Director, Atlantic Black Box

Dr. Dibble will illuminate the history of a tragedy on the high seas and share lessons we can draw from this story today. Learn how our region's repressed history of complicity with the business of slavery relates to current national conversations about race, privilege, identity and access to the American dream.

All lectures are free and begin at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Register at greenwichhistory.org/shining-a-light/

Welcome new staff members

Kelsie Dalton

Assistant Curator for Interpretation and Collections



Kelsie first joined us in 2020 as Project Digitization Associate. In her new role, she oversees guided docent tours of the Bush-Holley House for adult and public audiences, and provides support in the care and management of the museum collections. She holds a B.A. in History and Comparative Literature from Williams College.

Dianne Niklaus

Manager of Marketing and Communications



A decades-long resident of Cos Cob, Dianne has an extensive marketing background working with global corporations as well as local nonprofit organizations, including the Flinn Gallery at the Greenwich Library and the Japan Society of Fairfield County. She holds a BA in Art History/Asian Studies.

Alexis Zuniga

Communications Associate



Alexis joins the Greenwich Historical Society marketing team after working as a Sales Associate and Visitor Services Coordinator at our Museum Store over the past holiday season. Alexis has a degree in Web Development and Design, and assists with the creation of templates, designs and messaging for all print and digital media communications.

New Acquisition

Twilight Landscape by Leonard Ochtman



Leonard Ochtman (1854-1934), Untitled [Twilight], ca. 1894. Oil on canvas. 24 x 36 inches. Greenwich Historical Society, Gift of Susan G. and James T. Larkin.

The Greenwich Historical Society announces the recent gift of a luminous landscape painting by the Dutch-born Greenwich painter Leonard Ochtman (1854-1934). Depicting a view of distant farmhouses across grain fields at sunset, this painting was likely made in the present-day Riverside section of Greenwich, where Ochtman bought a house in 1891. He and his family eventually moved to another house that he designed on Valley Hill Road, called Greylegge. A largely self-taught artist, Ochtman gained a significant reputation as a landscape painter in the Tonalist tradition, and, like his Greenwich neighbor John Henry Twachtman, oversaw summer art classes in the area around his home. He was a foundational member of the Greenwich Society of Artists (now the Greenwich Art Society) and the Bruce Museum. His wife, Mina Fonda Ochtman (1862-1924), and daughter Dorothy Ochtman (1892-1971) were also accomplished artists.

The painting is a gift from the collection of Susan G. and James T. Larkin. Susan Larkin, a foremost scholar of American Impressionist art, curated the landmark 2001 exhibition *The Cos Cob Art Colony: Impressionists on the Connecticut Shore*, the 1989 exhibition *The Ochtmans of Cos Cob*, held at the Bruce Museum, and the inaugural 1997 exhibition at the Greenwich Historical Society Storehouse Gallery, *Impressions of Cos Cob*. She is also a former chairperson of the Greenwich Historical Society Board of Trustees.



Museum Store

The MUSEUM STORE is bursting with colorful new spring arrivals for Easter baskets, fashion styling and gifts!

News & Events

New Resource for Family Tree Research

The Great Ledger, Volumes I and II by Missy Wolfe



Missy Wolfe, lifelong Greenwich resident and author of *Hidden History of Colonial Greenwich*, a narrative summary of the development of Greenwich through the first century of town documents, has completed a monumental endeavor that promises to be a treasure trove for those interested in genealogy and the colonial history of Greenwich. *The Great Ledger, Volumes I and II*, represents the first 11 books of the oldest town records from the period 1640-1742, revealing hundreds of new genealogical relationships and

lost place names, with map illustrations and an extensive index. "With digital technology I have chronologically ordered the documents and created a finding path for each, useful for citation in genealogical documentation," explains Wolfe. "I think many family trees will find new growth in this work!"

Christopher Shields, Greenwich Historical Society's Curator of Library and Archives, echoes the value of Wolfe's contribution. "This new resource brings enhanced visibility and accessibility to these critical historical records, and offers many new insights into early land use and property allocations." Copies of both volumes are available for sale in the Museum Store.

Constant Holley MacRae Floral Design Series

Artful Arrangements: Tulips and Larkspur



April 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Join us as we explore history and take inspiration from one of Constant Holley MacRae's masterfully designed spring floral arrangements. In this master class, Trish O'Sullivan, former director at the NY Botanical Garden, will present principles and simple techniques through demonstration, discussion and step-by-step hands-on instruction, along with tips on how to keep flowers looking fresh and long-lasting to ensure floral design success.

Members: \$90.00

Non-Members: \$100.00

Materials Fee: \$75.00



Creating a Sense of Place

Discover Greenwich is designed to promote a sense of place and belonging, spark dialogue and inspire meaningful connections across our diverse community. **Explore** our local neighborhoods, topography, and architecture through a series of guided and self-guided Walking Tours. **Enrich** your knowledge and understanding of our vibrant history through on-site programs and archival resources to strengthen our connections to the past, to each other and to our collective future. **Engage** with members of our community through interactive and live events such as picnics and scavenger hunts to gain a deeper appreciation of our common experiences and shared environment.

Join us at our program launch event on May 12 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.



Art & History Camp 2022

Summer is prime time for kids at our historic campus, gardens and barn as they learn skills and explore Connecticut's colonial history and the works of the Cos Cob art colony through games, crafts and hands-on fun. Space is limited!

Early Bird registration deadline April 1
www.greenwichhistory.org/art-and-history-camp

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

May 30, Memorial Day

OFFICE, MUSEUM STORE AND CAFÉ

Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

MUSEUM GALLERIES

Wednesday – Sunday 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

BUSH-HOLLEY HOUSE

Wednesday–Sunday, 12:00 p.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. Tours last 45 minutes. Call for reservations.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

By appointment

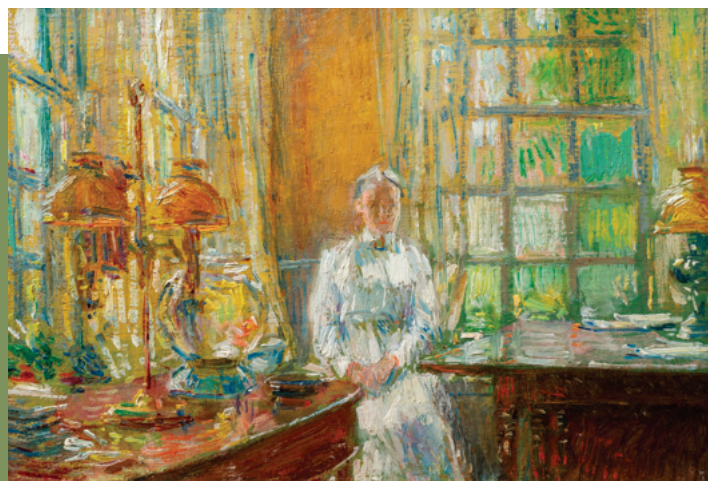
ADMISSION

\$10 adults, \$8 seniors, \$7 group rate

FREE: Youth under 18, members, active military/Blue Star. FREE for all the first Wednesday of every month.

Visit all 21 museums on the Connecticut Art Trail for \$35. Buy a passport at the museum lobby desk or at ctarttrail.org.

We work to preserve and interpret Greenwich history to strengthen the community's connection to our past, to each other and to our future.



Childe Hassam, *Mrs. Holley of Cos Cob, Connecticut*, 1912. Oil on wood. Greenwich Historical Society, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Royce.

Upcoming Events

Bush-Holley House Women's History Tour:

The Holley Women and the Cos Cob Art Colony

Saturday, March 12, 12:00 p.m.

The Witness Stones Project:

Restoring History, Honoring Humanity with Dennis Culliton

Thursday, March 24, 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Bush-Holley House Women's History Tour:

Womanhood and Enslaved Narratives in the Bush Family Household

Saturday, March 26, 12:00 p.m.

Bridgeport's Little Liberia:

The Importance of African American Historic Preservation with Maisa L. Tisdale

Thursday, April 7, 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Diseased Ship:

A Tale of New England's Twin Plagues with Dr. Meadow Dibble

Thursday, April 21, 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Constant Holley MacRae Floral Design Series:

Artful Arrangements: Tulips and Larkspur

Friday, April 22, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Tavern Garden Market

Wednesday, May 4, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Discover Greenwich Launch Celebration

Thursday, May 12, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Discover Greenwich Walking Tour

Greenwich Municipal Center

Saturday, May 14, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Tavern Garden Market

Wednesday, May 18, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Plein Air Painting Workshop with Dmitri Wright

Saturday, May 21, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

For more information and to register for events, visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203.869.6899.