

Greenwich Historical Society Newsletter

EXHIBITION INSIGHTS

A chat with curator Kathy Craughwell-Varda



Greenwich During the Revolutionary War: A Frontier Town on the Front Line

On view through March 9, 2025 with guided gallery tours on alternating Sundays from 1:00-1:30pm.

“The residents of Greenwich had to choose a side to support during the American Revolution, with no idea of which would succeed”

Anticipating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in July 2026, Greenwich Historical Society’s current exhibition tells the individual histories of Greenwich residents during the Revolution and the influence of this pivotal event on the town and region. We spoke to curator Kathy Craughwell-Varda to further articulate the historical nuances of this era.

The most interesting examinations of the past speak to both historic fact and current relevance. Why is it important to explore the history of the Revolutionary era in Greenwich and Fairfield County at this moment in time?

As a curator, I find that people often focus on the outcome of historic events, rather than what it was really like to live during extraordinary times. The attention is so much on those who take center stage, that the experiences of ordinary people are often overlooked. The residents of Greenwich had to choose a side to support during the American Revolution, with no idea of which would succeed—not very different from the political climate we are living in today.

Personal choice, as a means of determining historic outcome, is highlighted in this exhibition. How would you compare the impact of the decisions made by these revolutionary era individuals with those we face today, now that the notion of choice has become so quintessentially American?

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, many people tried to remain neutral in order to stay out of the conflict, but when the British brought the war to Fairfield County, it became almost impossible to not side with either the Patriots or Loyalists. The section of the exhibit that explores the extended David Bush family of Greenwich and how they were divided by choosing opposing sides in the conflict will encourage visitors to consider their own relationships and how they handle differences in opinion.

Then and now, history can advance society or lay a foundation for unresolved issues. During this era, how did the actions of Greenwich and Fairfield County residents contribute to the progress of our nation’s history?

One of the most important outcomes of the Revolutionary War in Connecticut is the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1784. This law guaranteed that children born to enslaved women after March 1, 1784, would be freed once they turned 25, later reduced to 21. This was a very small step toward eradicating slavery in Connecticut and favored enslavers over the enslaved. The law made no provision for liberating the parents of these children nor did it address how enslaved adults could be freed. This law is a great example of how even though America won its independence, the battle over what independence meant and who was entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness would continue to be a contentious issue for the next two and a half centuries.

Introducing New Staff

MELISSA HOUSTON

Director of Education & Interpretation



Melissa started her professional career as a high school social studies teacher before moving into the museum field.

She has over a decade of experience in collections management and a Masters in History which has helped inform how she crafts school programs and public tours. Melissa has worked with the Barnum Museum, the Newtown Historical Society, and Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center. She is excited to engage with the history at Greenwich Historical Society.

LAUREN ACKERLEY

Director of Public Programs & Exhibitions



Lauren has an M.A. in Museum Anthropology from Columbia University and 10 years of experience in museums and

non-profits, most recently as Director of Interpretive Programming at Rye Historical Society and previously at Stamford Museum and Nature Center and Norwalk Maritime Aquarium. Her graduate projects included a thesis on visitor engagement with the past at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and an online exhibition on Urban Table, the Food Movement Serving NYC.

OLIVIA LUNTZ

Manager of Education & Outreach



Olivia joined the team at the Greenwich Historical Society in 2021 as a docent and served as Education Assistant

for the spring field trip seasons in 2023 and 2024. She has a B.A. in History from Amherst College and fondly remembers visiting the Historical Society countless times while growing up in Cos Cob. Olivia is thrilled that in her new role she will be helping to teach the next generation of Greenwich students about the history of their hometown.

Message from the Executive Director & CEO



As the hues of autumn inspire the season, we are filled with gratitude for our unique community. We welcome new trustees and honor the dedication of members, staff, donors and sponsors who steadfastly support our mission.

This year's Music on the Great Lawn summer concert series marked its highest attendance ever, and it was wonderful to see so many members enjoying the benefit of free admission and the

opportunity to gather as neighbors over the course of the season.

We celebrated Susie Baker, recipient of the 2024 David Ogilvy Preservation Award, and honored Scott Mitchell and the Mitchell Family with the History in the Making Award. Their dedication to conservancy, preservation and philanthropy benefits Greenwich and the world at large.

In keeping with our partnership initiative, we launched *conneCT-NY Culture Trip*. This new collaboration with Clay Art Center of Port Chester and Flinn Gallery in Greenwich promotes a day trip exploration of the rich cultural offerings in our communities.

Our current exhibition, *Greenwich During the Revolutionary War: A Frontier Town on the Front Line* highlights the personal choices of Greenwich residents during the Revolutionary era and their impact on our nation's history and the present. A new "Let's Learn" interactive gallery feature for children inspires curiosity and facilitates understanding of life in Colonial America.

We look forward to welcoming you to the campus over the coming months to enjoy festive programs, events and shopping at the Museum Store. With appreciation for your support and our shared history in this beautiful town we call home, we extend warmest wishes for the upcoming holidays.

Debra Mecky, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

Welcome New Trustees

MELINDA CARROLL



Melinda serves on the board of the Aldrich Museum, and has worked in the marketing department at Sotheby's and in sales at Knoll International. She holds a B.A. in Art History and American Studies from Fairfield University.

PATRICK MELE



Patrick is the owner of his eponymous lifestyle shop in Greenwich, and founder of Patrick Mele LLC, an AD100 and Elle Decor A List design firm with projects throughout the country and abroad. Mele has a degree in Art History and Cultural Studies from New York University's Gallatin School, and honed his skills working with iconic brands including Ralph Lauren and Kate Spade. Patrick is a co-chair of the Greenwich Historical Society Designer Lecture and Holiday Boutique.

LISA ERRICO



Lisa is a member of the board of The Society of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and Chair of the MSKCC Spring Ball. She is also a member of the board of Horizons and serves on the Development Committee at Brunswick School and is a former Trustee at Family Centers.

SHELBY SAER



Shelby is Chairman of the Board of the Oak Alley Foundation, a National Historic Landmark in New Orleans, LA and Co-Chair of the Board of Governors of the Packard Center for ALS Research at Johns Hopkins and a member of Cradles to Crayons Leadership Council of NYC. A graduate of Georgetown University, Shelby has also served on the boards of the Greenwich Boys and Girls Club, Brunswick School, Stanwich School and Greenwich Academy.



Time Flies When You're Having Fun



Introduced this summer, Time Travelers KidStudio offers children and families the opportunity to engage with the past to gain appreciation and perspective on the present. This fall and winter, a portal to the past is opened with new interactive,

craft-based activities that explore the art and history of Colonial America. Celine, one of our summer attendees, shared, “My favorite part of the museum was signing my name on the KidStudio mural.” Vivian, a regular Timer Traveler stated, “I like the beanbags. My favorite activity was the oil pastel landscapes.” Time Travelers KidStudio is a unique and immersive experience that awakens children’s curiosity through creative connection.

Open during Gallery hours, with docent-led activities Wednesdays and Saturdays from 12 p.m.-4 p.m.

“We were especially thrilled that the studio was available to introduce my younger ones to the museum. ”

~SUSAN, GRANDPARENT



Interns & Volunteers: A Mutual Benefit!

Greenwich Historical Society relies on its team of on-site volunteers for essential support. Sharing a common passion for history, preservation and the Town of Greenwich, their commitment is significant and their impact, evident.

Historical Society because of its connection to the American Impressionists. Seven years later, she is now on staff at the Museum Store. Green Team volunteers are vital to the maintenance of our heirloom vegetable and ornamental Impressionist flower gardens, enjoyed by our community year-round.

“I like volunteering for the Green Team because it is a public space unlike other community gardens in town,” explains Cheney. Catherine Stahl, one of Ginny’s teammates agrees, “I always look forward each year to working in the historic gardens.”



Each year, Summer Marketing interns bring a fresh perspective to campus. Their social media skills are an enormous asset in publicizing programming and expanding our reach to a wider audience. Indiana University student Karena Schneider, 2023 intern, shared aspects of her experience with us. “As I look ahead to my future business career, I am grateful to the entire GHS community for providing me with the opportunity to grow and establish a solid foundation for my professional journey.”



Caleigh Peloso, a rising senior at Georgetown University, stated “I really enjoyed digging into the archives and building up the emphasis on history in our social media. Presenting tidbits from our archives was a significant and really fun project I worked on throughout the summer.”

Ginny Cheney, a green team volunteer who also dedicates her time to other organizations in town, was originally drawn to Greenwich



We are grateful for the involvement and camaraderie of our many volunteers, their contribution of skills and enthusiasm, and we welcome newcomers to explore the variety of opportunities to join us and make a difference!

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Thursday, November 28, Thanksgiving Day
Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day
Wednesday, January 1, New Year's Day

OFFICE, MUSEUM STORE AND CAFÉ

Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

MUSEUM GALLERIES

Wednesday–Sunday, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

SITE RENTALS

Email dsuozzo@greenwichhistory.org
for inquiries or event bookings.

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

Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Appointments available during office hours.

ADMISSION

\$10 adults, \$8 seniors
FREE: Members, youth under 18, active military / Blue Star
FREE admission every Wednesday
Reciprocal benefits through [NARM](#)

GROUP TOURS

Available on request.

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



SUPPORT OUR MISSION

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

Holiday Boutique

AT GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB

An elevated one-stop shopping experience featuring a
highly curated array of clothing, accessories and gifts
for you and everyone on your list!

OPENING NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 5:30PM–8:00PM

BOUTIQUE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 9:30AM–4:30PM



6TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF

Tabletop Trees

WEDNESDAY DEC 4–SATURDAY, DEC 7

Holiday Festival

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 4:00–7:00 PM

47 STRICKLAND ROAD, COS COB, CT



Bid on beautiful trees featuring the creative talents of local
retailers, organizations and designers who help make our
homes festive during the holiday season. Proceeds support
the Greenwich Historical Society.