

KILLINGWORTH *Historical Society*

October 2020

Killingworth Historical Society Membership Application and Dues - June 1, 2020 - May 31, 2021

<u>Type of Membership</u>	<u>Annual Dues</u>	<u>Additional Contributions</u>	
_____ Individual	\$15	_____ Matching Gift Program	\$ _____
_____ Family	\$25	_____ Contribution	\$ _____
_____ Business/Professional	\$50		
_____ Life (Individual)	\$150		

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 E-Mail: _____

Please make checks payable to "Killingworth Historical Society." Dues and contributions may be tax deductible.

Mail to: Killingworth Historical Society, P.O. Box 707, Killingworth, CT 06419

OFFICERS

Linda M. Dudek, President
 Cynthia Rich, V.P.
 Deborah Dekkers, Treasurer
 Katrin Walton, Secretary

DIRECTORS

Susan Adinolfo
 Bruce Dodson
 Claudette Lagasse
 Thomas Lentz
 David Meixell
 Mary Meixell
 Jan O'Sullivan
 Regina Regolo
 Dennis Rich
 Kenneth Wodatch
 Kim Wright

PROPERTIES

Union District School
 Roast Meat Hill Road
 Black Rock School
 Recycle Way
 Killingworth Images Site
 Green Hill Road

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 7, 14, 21 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
 Raffle ticket sales, Black Rock Schoolhouse, Recycle Way

Nov. 21, 9:30 a.m.

KHS Annual Meeting at Parmelee Farm

Dec. 5, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Christmas Fair at the Parmelee Farm
Social distancing and other safety measures will be followed. Please check our website or Facebook as we get closer to events for any updates.

A Message from the President

Greetings Killingworth Friends and Neighbors,
 What a crazy year this has been. We have all run the gamut of emotions and experienced disappointment over many events that could not be held due to the changes COVID-19 has brought to our lives.

The Historical Society farmhouse, like many other buildings had to close its doors for this year. Sadly, the programs we had scheduled had to be postponed. We look forward to times when we can safely get together again.

The Historical Society was pleased to be included in the KES second grade's virtual learning program about our community that the teachers organized. We appreciated the opportunity to impress the importance of Killingworth history.

Our funding comes only from your membership, donations, our tag sale, and Christmas Fair. We were not able to hold our May tag sale but did hold several small sales this summer using the lawn areas of the farm to enable social distancing. We are working on the logistics of safely holding our popular Christmas Fair. The fair may look much different, but we rely on the revenues to maintain our properties and continue our preservation efforts.

We hope you will enjoy this newsletter and as always, we welcome you to join the Society through your membership or volunteering.

Stay safe and well.

Sincerely,
Linda M. Dudek, President

Annual Meeting Notice

The HKS By-laws require the Board of Directors hold an Annual Meeting for the purpose of nominating Directors. The meeting will be held on Saturday, November 21, at the Parmelee Farm at 9:30 a.m. All members of the Society are eligible to vote at this meeting.

Parmelee Farmhouse Painting Raffle

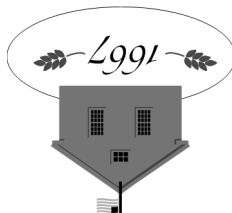
Award-winning Killingworth artist Sandy Smith has generously donated a beautiful painting of The Parmelee Farmhouse in the twilight of winter, which the Society will raffle as part of our Christmas Fair fundraiser. The drawing will be held at the Fair on Saturday, December 5, at 3:00 p.m. at the Parmelee Farm; winner need not be present. Proceeds from the sale of tickets will be used for the Society's preservation efforts and projects.



Tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The painting will be on display and tickets available at the Black Rock Schoolhouse on Recycle Way Saturday, November 7, 14, and 21, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and during the Christmas Fair. You may also purchase tickets from any Historical Society Board Member, or by contacting Donna Dupuis at 860.663.2223.

Killingworth, CT 06419
 Postal Patron

KILLINGWORTH
Historical Society
 P.O. Box 707, Killingworth, CT 06419



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By Thomas L. Lentz, Municipal Historian

In Colonial Killingworth, funerals were held at the church or in private homes. The pastor gave a sermon and prayers were said. Some eighteenth and nineteenth century funeral sermons were published. The church bell was rung at the decease of persons. The funeral procession moved from the meetinghouse to the burying ground, which might have a central aisle for the procession to enter. The deceased was carried in a horse-drawn cart or wagon, later a hearse. The pastor followed in a carriage, then came mourners - families and friends dressed in black in carts, on horseback, or on foot. At the burying ground, more orations and prayers were read. After the burial, the family often conducted an open house where large quantities of food and drink were consumed.

The first hearses were open horse-drawn wagons. These could be painted black and have a top but were usually devoid of ornamentation. It is likely this was the first type of hearse used in Killingworth. The first true hearse carriages had a plain chassis but could have ornaments such as urns or wooden torches with eternal flames on top. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the appearance of the hearse began to change. They became larger and considerably more ornate with fancy gilded carvings and glass windows with draperies inside. This was the type of hearse purchased by the Town of Killingworth in 1871.

The first record of a hearse in Killingworth is a document entitled "Reccord of the herse Meetting 1854 & 55," containing the minutes of meetings of the inhabitants of the Lane District regarding a hearse. At a meeting held in the Lane District schoolhouse on March 13, 1854, Deacon Abel Wilcox was appointed moderator, Wyllys D. Kelsey clerk, and Jared Rutty collector. At the meeting, it was "Voted that we appoint a Committee of two individuals to enter into contract with some person to place upon the hearse a suitable top the expense not to

exceed 25 dollars. Also to ascertain where a suitable site can be had on which to erect a house for the hearse..."

Based on this vote, the Lane District owned a hearse. It was probably little more than an open wagon in view of the vote to put a top on it. At the next meeting in April, the committee reported that they had contracted with Mr. Alfred Norton to put a top on the hearse for \$23. It was voted to put the hearse house "on the corner west of the Meeting house" and to circulate subscription papers to raise funds for the hearse house.

They must not have been able to obtain the desired site because at a meeting on September 11, 1854, it was "Voted that we reconsider the vote to set the Herse House on the corner west of the meeting house. Voted that we set the Herse House in the north west corner of the burying ground in the eastern part of the district." The Lane and Parker Hill School Districts had been combined as the Lane District, so that the burying ground referred to is the Parker Hill Cemetery. It is not known if a hearse house was built at this cemetery.

The final entry in the document records that at the annual School Meeting in the Lane District on September 25, 1855, Edward Rutty was appointed to take charge of the hearse. It was also "Voted that the person who has charg of the herse may hire the herse to any person out of the district and to appropriate the avails to the repairs of the herse." Thus, the hearse could be rented out.

Besides the Lane District hearse, the Congregational Society (Second Ecclesiastical Society) owned a hearse, and it is possible other school districts had hearses. These hearses may not have been readily available to all residents because, in 1871, a petition was presented to the town requesting that the town procure a hearse for the use of the town. A special meeting was held on June 12, 1871, and it was voted that the "town provide a hearse for the burial of the dead." The expenses were not to exceed five hundred dollars. The resolutions passed by a vote of 35 yeas and 27 nays. Henry Kelsey and Nathan Lane were appointed agents to procure a hearse. They traveled to Middletown and purchased a used hearse made around 1860 by Cornwall & Warner Carriages. The hearse is ten feet long and seven feet in height, with glass windows on the sides and back curtained in velvet. It has a pair of carriage lamps set into brackets beside the driver's seat. The head of the casket fit under the seat of the driver. It may have been drawn by one horse but apparently this was not sufficient because in 1881 it was voted that the town provide a two-horse pole for the hearse. In 1904, the selectmen appointed Lauren A. Nettleton "Driver of Town Hearse."



The Killingworth Town Hearse after restoration.

Regarding the housing of the hearse, on November 6, 1871, the Congregational Society voted "That we give the 'Society hearse house' and the old hearse to the Committee appointed by the town to provide a suitable place in which to keep the new hearse, and that committee apply it, or its avails, towards making or providing the suitable place as contemplated by the town vote." A hearse house, probably not the original, stood behind the Congregational Church near the Agricultural Hall (Old Town Hall). The hearse house burned down in 2004 when a hot lawnmower was left in it. Horse-drawn hearses ceased to be used when motorized vehicles became available.

At a town meeting on April 10, 1972, it was voted to donate the hearse to the Killingworth Historical Society. First Selectman E. Stuart Campbell presented the keys to the hearse house to Mrs.

Martha Smith, chair of the acquisitions committee of the Historical Society. The hearse, then in poor condition, was stored in various barns of members of the Historical Society. In 2003, the hearse was taken to Mary Lightner of Wagonland Barn, Bernardston, Massachusetts. She is a specialist in the restoration of horse-drawn vehicles. Mary christened the hearse "Harriet" and the name has stuck. The repair included restoration of the detailed leatherwork on the seat and back, the interior curtains and accessories, and the frame and floor. It took over two years to restore the hearse at a cost of \$11,000. The hearse is drawn at the annual Killingworth Memorial Day Parade and exhibited occasionally by the Historical Society. It is now housed at the Parmelee Farm.

©Thomas L. Lentz, Municipal Historian

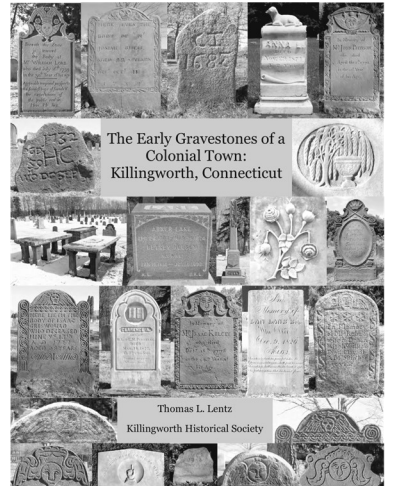
Congratulations, Tom Lentz!

The Connecticut League of History Organizations has recognized Thomas Lentz with their 2020 Award of Merit for Publications for his book *Early Gravestones of a Colonial Town: Killingworth Connecticut*. Tom is our Municipal Historian, a founding member of the Killingworth Historical Society, and has served on the its Board of Directors for over 50 years.

The League noted that "this publication is an invaluable documentation of gravestones and an important historical record of the area's early residents." The book is filled with over 400 photos of gravestones and fascinating historical information on Killingworth and surrounding towns.

Copies of the book may be purchased through the Historical Society, at RJ Julia Booksellers in Madison, or on Amazon.

Thank you, Tom for all the hours of research you did for this book preserving another part of our history and congratulations on your award.



Bring Your Woolies & Wear Your Face Masks to the Christmas Fair

This year our Christmas Fair will look very different from years past. We have been carefully planning to conduct the fair following COVID-19 guidelines to keep everyone safe. Please check our website and Facebook page regularly for updates and changes as December nears.

While things may look a bit different, you will still find the one-of-a-kind, handcrafted creations you have come to expect from us.

The fair will be held Saturday, December 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Parmelee Farmhouse will be open with a limited number of people allowed at one time. We suggest you dress warmly, as much of our fair will be held outside in tents.

Local artist Sandy Smith will have her newest addition to The Birds of Killingworth Collection, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Each bird is hand-sewn by Sandy.



We are excited to welcome everyone to the fair and hope that you will once again enjoy all our creations. We will be following social distancing guidelines and mandatory face masks for all. Hand sanitizer will be available.

Please don't forget to check our website and Facebook often, as we will be posting up-to-date information as it becomes available.

See you December 5 at the Parmelee Farm!