

July 4, 1776 to July 4, 2026

The celebration and reflection
of the signing of the
Declaration of Independence



Lecture at the Kate: Revolution in Connecticut



On April 12th, Dr. Matthew Warshauer, professor of History at Central Connecticut State University, conducted an invigorating conversation about how Connecticut became radicalized for independence from Britain.

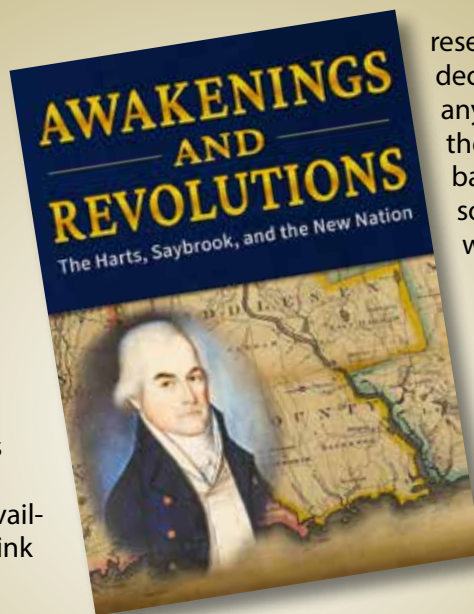
It is a story of East of the Connecticut River against West of the river, and a political coup that shaped our state's and nation's future. We were more than the Provision State; Connecticut stood at the forefront of Revolutionary thought!

Historical Society Launches New Book

On April 26, the Historical Society was excited and proud to launch a new book about the Harts in Old Saybrook in time for the America 250 celebration. *Awakenings and Revolutions: The Harts, Saybrook, and the New Nation* was launched at The Kate attended by an enthusiastic full house. We sold out of the signed copies of the book on hand for the event. Restocked signed copies are available at the Stevenson Archives and the Hart House during open hours: \$18 for members. It is also available through Amazon.com (find a link at staybrookhistory.org/store)

The Society commissioned "Awakenings and Revolutions" from Elizabeth Normen in late 2022 after she approached the Society about helping out with a project. Elizabeth had recently retired as founding publisher of *Connecticut Explored*, the magazine of Connecticut history, an organization she led for 20 years.

Elizabeth began what turned into three years of

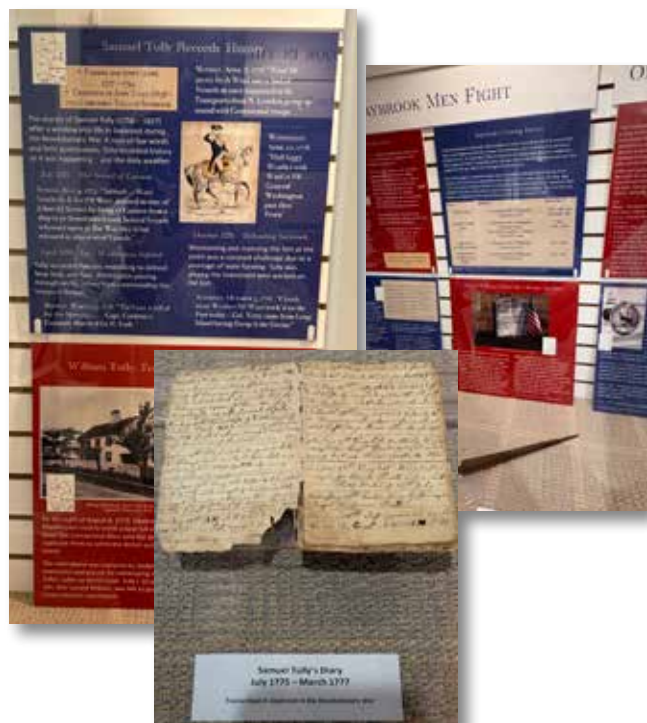


research. As she describes it, she decided at the outset to put aside any preconceived notions of what the Harts' story was about and go back to as many original, primary sources as she could find "to see where the story led."

When asked what surprised her most about what she found, she says, "the extent to which the Harts' story intersects with so many major moments of Connecticut's and the nation's history from the late colonial to Early Republic periods. It's pretty amazing and a fascinating story of one family in the early years of nation building in America."

"That is the strength of this book," Board President Marie McFarlin says. "She puts the Harts in the context of the broader Connecticut and US story in a way that hasn't been done before. It's very accessible and is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in Connecticut history."

Mini-Exhibition: Saybrook in the Revolution



As an extension of her new book about the Hart family, Elizabeth Normen created a mini-exhibition, now open, in two exhibit cases in the gallery. She covered people and events from throughout Saybrook (which during the American Revolution included Westbrook, Essex, Chester, Deep River, and Old Saybrook). She covered both the war as it impacted the town, soldiers away at war, and privateering.

Samuel Tully's diary from the period provides tantalizing details about life here in town during the war. Between mentions of the weather and the work he performed each day, he notes Gen. George Washington passing through town on his way from Boston, where he first took command of the Continental Army, to defend New York. He frequently notes the sound of cannon in the sound as the British navy attacked American shipping. He also describes making salt from sea water. Salt was in short supply and critical to preserving meat for soldier's rations. He also made saltpeter, a critical element in making gun powder.

William Hart Jr., John Hart, Samuel Hart, and Elisha Hart are featured. William commanded a Connecticut light horse militia regiment with the rank of major (he be-

came a major general after the war). John Hart saw the most action as a captain in the Continental Army. The majority of Samuel's contribution was here on the home front helping to secure supplies for soldiers and their families. Elisha was a privateer captain, a high risk-high reward endeavor. He was captured three times by the British. Privateering was how the Hart brothers got their start in the West Indies trade.

Visit the Gen. William Hart House this summer to see the exhibition, including Oliver Graham's powder horn and a Revolutionary War bayonet. The exhibition is also available in booklet form.

"Songs of America's Transition" Concert in the Garden

The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated in the Hart House Heritage Gardens on July 5th with songs and stories about life in the 13 colonies and the early years of the Republic.

Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle performed songs that gave cultural insight into America's colonial history. Their songs are true to the era.



Veterans of the American Revolution

This is a tentative list of American Revolutionary War veterans buried in Cypress and Upper Cemetery of Saybrook as it existed in 1776. Unless stated otherwise, source is the Charles R. Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions and Records. Note, this list does not include those veterans who left the area and buried in other cemeteries.

American Revolutionary Veterans in Cypress from list prepared on Jan. 10, 1980

Bushnell, Elisha
 Bushnell, Constant
 Bushnell, Jedediah
 Dickinson, Richard (Navy)
 Hart, General William
 Ingraham, Capt. William
 Kirtland, Samuel
 Shipman, Capt. John
 Stow, Capt. Jabez
 Tully, Elias
 Williams, Daniel
 Williams, Capt. Charles
 Williams, Capt. Daniel



Upper Cemetery - American Revolutionary War Veterans

Chalker, Moses	1758-1842	Pvt.	Capt. Palmer's Co.
Chalker, Oliver	1760-1846	Pvt.	Capt. Ely's Co.
Chapman, Elisha	1741-1825	Capt.	7th Militia Reg.
Lord, William	1745-1825	Lt.	6th Reg. 9th Co.
Sill, Richard	1722-1795	Major Col.	Parson's Reg.
Waterhouse, William	1734-1814	Pvt.	Capt. Gallup's Co.
Whittlesey, Azariah	1741-1806	Capt.	Privateer, Master of Brig. Fanny and Frigate Oliver Cromwell

Provided Connecticut River and coastal defense during the American Revolution. While Master of the brig FANNY, in 1777, he was able to seize his sixth and last prize, a British vessel laden with mahogany cargo worth about 20,000 pounds sterling. Inscription on his headstone reads: "This monument is erected to the memory of Capt. Azariah Whittlesey, aged 65 years and his Grand Son Samuel Aged 12 years, Son of Samuel W. & Sally Whittlesey who was both Drowned at Say Brook ferry the 9th of April 1806 and who are interred here. Also Capt. William Whittlesey, son of Capt. Azariah Whittlesey who was Lost at Sea, Sept. 1806, aged 33 years. 'Mourners and Friends Weep not for us three, who we were Drowned in the Sea.'"



July 4, 1801

Say-Brook, July 4, 1801

This day being the gladsome anniversary of American Independence, the morning was ushered in by the firing of cannon and the ringing of bell.

At twelve o'clock the same testimonials of joy were repeated. At one o'clock P.M. the committee of arrangements accompanied by the citizens of Say-Brook waited on the Rev. Mr. HOTCHKISS, the orator of the day, at his house, and from thence walked in procession to the church. Service commenced with prayer, and was followed by an oration. On the close of public service, the citizens repaired to the house of Mr. H. PRATT where a large assembly of gentlemen and ladies partook of a social repast prepared for the occasion. The entertainment was closed by the following toasts, each of which was accompanied by a discharge of an ancient piece of ordinance, one of the first wall-cannon introduced to New England by the celebrated George Fenwick, Esq.

1. The ever memorable fourth of July 1776, and those celebrated patriots who signed the declaration of Independence. May tyrants tremble, and freemen rejoice.
2. The United States. May they ever preserve their dignity Independent of all foreign nations.
3. The Immortal WASHINGTON, the father of our Independence. May his name, in union with this day, be the (----) anchor for the sons of freedom, while America and time shall last.
4. The President of the United States in his inaugural speech breathes peace, dignity and reconciliation, may the citizens ever find, in his admiration, the same spirit, followed by universal love, that "all are Federalists, all are Republicans".
5. The Vice-President and congress of the United States, May their deliberations never be influenced by the mistakes of prejudice.
6. JOHN ADAMS, late President of the United States. May the shades of retirement, after his long services, be crowned with the rewards of "faithful servant".
7. The Heroes who fought and bled to gain American Freedom. May their names be as celebrated as this day.
8. The Militia of the United States. May they stand with their lamps burning prepared for the calls of their country.
9. The Clergy. We remember them as the firm friends of the American Revolution. May their labors breath peace on earth, and good will to men.
10. Agriculture, Arts and Science. May they attain their zenith in the American soil.
11. The American Fair. The pride of their country. May they never wait for heroes to defend them.
12. The American Commerce. May neutral rights be ever respected, and their merchantmen rejoice together on the ocean unsearched.
13. The Governor and State of Connecticut.
14. The gallant Capt. Wadsworth. We announce with republican triumph the memorable Oct. 1687, the time when he and his brave comrades extinguished the lights, to prevent the loss of the Connecticut Charter, and concealed it in the celebrated oak from the demands of Sir Edmund Andross, and by this means preserved the freedom of the state.

THE OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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15. George Fenwick. May the cannon, whose thunder we now hear, ever remind us of that enterprising first settler of Say-Brook, who left the shores of tyranny, and brought with him this piece of ordinance, inscribed with the initials of his name, to defend himself, and brethren in the land of freedom.

16. The brave capt. Thomas Bull. The first commander of Say-Brook Fort whose fortitude in the year 1675 prevented is surrender to Sir Edmond, and compelled that tool of tyranny to acknowledge that, "the horns of this Bull deserve to be tipped with silver."

The whole proceedings were concluded in perfect order by the citizens even countenance beaming full approbation and joy. On the discharge of cannon for closing the day, precisely at seven the citizens immediately retired to their respective dwellings.

Elisha Hart,
Robert Ely,
Azariah Whittlesly,
Giles Blague,
Rufus Clark,
William Lynde,
John Ayre,
Elihu Jones

Committee of Arrangements

*Can we, the people, learn from the
past and work together to create a
more perfect Union?*

THE OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY