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Hello Friends!



Danbury Museum garden, spring 2020

It's Friday and we're so glad to see you all again. It has been another busy week at the Museum From Home "offices" of Guertin, Wells, and Amundsen. In addition to our daily chats, there were webinars on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday and while they are generally helpful, they also help us keep track of what day it is.

We joined our [Danbury Library](#) partners in celebrating National Library Week and we recognized the Danbury Garden Club (particularly the Civic Committee) with posts for the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and #MuseumSunshine, an initiative to share sunny images--photos, paintings, and artifacts--with museums worldwide.

The Danbury Garden Club is celebrating their 95th anniversary this year, so we'll be sharing a lot of photos of their (new as of August 2019) beautiful and important pollinator garden and all the

other colorful spots in the garden in the coming months. And if you haven't visited yet this spring, the tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths are all in full bloom so now is a perfect time for a physically distant visit to our peaceful garden. We are most grateful for the stalwart support and tireless efforts of the DGC in our museum gardens.

We've added more *NEW* content to the [Museum From Home](#) page of our website. This Sunday, April 26, is the anniversary of the British Raid on Danbury so we're sharing extra Revolutionary War content this weekend. Patrick has puzzled up a Sybil Ludington-themed cryptogram and we've included the Berton Braley poem to give you a few hints. There's also a Rev War themed word search and we've added Tricentennial Book No. 2, *The Untold Story: Danbury's Unsung Role in the Revolution*.

In keeping with our Rev War theme, we know how much you all are missing museums, we are, too. Scroll down and find **Museums From Your Couch** (Rev War edition) a collection of Rev War sites and museums to visit (virtually) with your family this weekend.

And no less revolutionary is John O'Donnell's essay on a pair of Hans Holbein the Younger portraits that play a crucial role in history.

We also have Bob Young's final installment on conducting genealogy research at the museum; this week is specifically related to probate records, tax lists, and directories.

Thank you, we really enjoy reaching out and sharing a bit of our week with you all and we hope you enjoy getting a little inside look at the Danbury Museum crew, too. (And don't forget, if you get the *three little dots* or *view entire message* prompt, click on it so you don't miss anything!)

Keep well,

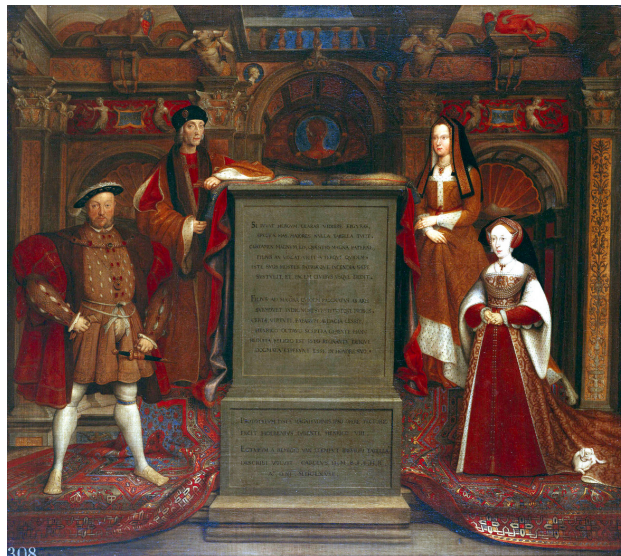
Brigid Guertin (Executive Director, City Historian, Fearless Leader, Headmistress of The Guertin School)

Patrick Wells (Research Specialist, Social Media Manager, Maestro of Merch)

Michele Lee Amundsen (Collections Manager, Twitter Tattler, Lost in the Virtual Louvre)



Danbury Museum garden, spring 2020



A copy of the Holbein portrait by Remigius van Leemput of the entire mural is usually on display at Hampton Court Palace.



*Anne of Cleves by Holbein the Younger
(Louvre Museum, Paris).*

Two Paintings

By John O'Donnell

Historians rarely ascribe major changes in history to portraiture. But if one looks at the reign of King Henry VIII we can point to two major paintings which had a powerful influence on his reign (1509-1547).

I recently read the concluding volume of Hilary Mantel's trilogy on Thomas Cromwell, the king's chief minister for a large part of his reign. The volume is titled *The Mirror and the Light*. It brings this titanic undertaking to a powerful conclusion.

Cromwell's fall from grace is a long, complex story. He was a commoner who had risen because of his talents and his extraordinary work ethic to a commanding position in the king's service. He was opposed by the aristocratic faction surrounding the king which was led by the Duke of Norfolk who was Cromwell's implacable enemy. Cromwell had played the major role in extricating the king from his disastrous marriage to Anne Boleyn who was a relative of Norfolk. Cromwell was at the peak of his power with the execution of Anne on May 19, 1536.

Now we can look at the importance of two paintings created by Hans Holbein the Younger. Holbein, who was from Germany, was appointed the King's Painter in 1536. He painted a dynastic portrait (in [Walker Art Gallery](#)) of Henry VIII, Queen Jane Seymour (who succeeded Anne Boleyn), who was his favorite wife and had given him the male heir he had been hungering for, Henry's father Henry VII, and his mother Elizabeth of York. In the painting Henry VIII is, of course, the dominant figure. He is larger than all of the other figures and was portrayed in an aggressively masculine pose almost as a warning to everyone who came close to him. He was clearly a very dangerous king to be in the service of. Many people discovered this fact at their peril.

After Queen Jane Seymour's death in childbirth (the future King Edward VI) in October of 1537, Henry was again plunged into the quest for a new wife. Cromwell counseled Henry to seek a Protestant alliance with a new wife. He ultimately recommended to Henry Anne of Cleves, a princess in the small, but strategically located duchy. The king dispatched Holbein to Cleves to paint the princess so he could decide if he should marry her. Holbein dutifully did both a miniature and a full-sized painting of Anne (which is in the Louvre's collection). There is an historical

dispute about whether Holbein embellished her looks or actually depicted her accurately. In any case the king was pleased with the portrait and a contract was drawn up for Henry to marry her.

But when she came to England in 1540, the king impetuously went to meet her; Henry saw her and told his advisers "I like her not." They did marry but were divorced after only six months. The king gave Anne a generous settlement which allowed her to remain in England and she and Henry remained friends.

Other parties involved in the affair did not fare as well however. Holbein never received another commission from the king. But it was much worse for Thomas Cromwell who had prodded Henry to seek this marriage. The king, despite heaping high honors on Cromwell, was extremely unhappy with him. Henry began to listen to the aristocratic faction led by Norfolk who sought the ouster of Cromwell. Cromwell was arrested under a bill of attainder, stripped of his offices, money and property and clapped in the Tower of London. Despite begging Henry for Mercy, Mercy, Mercy he was executed for treason and heresy on Tower Hill on July 28, 1540. Henry later regretted this execution.

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



Monument to General David Wooster at Wooster Cemetery

GENEALOGY RESEARCH 4

By Bob Young

This is the fourth and final in a series of articles on conducting genealogy research, with a focus on greater Danbury families. This article will cover probate records, directories, and tax lists.

At the Danbury Museum and Historical Society, the following items are available for your research assistance.

Probate Records – the Museum has multiple binders filled with probate papers – both copies and originals. While most all of these papers deal with property transfers, there are also wills, guardianship petitions, water rights, land donations, etc.

The oldest document in our collection is a copy of a deed from Judah Gregory, selling off his land holdings in Norwalk. Judah Gregory was one of the original founders of Danbury. The deed is

dated 27 December, 1684. There are more than a dozen deed copies from the 17th century.

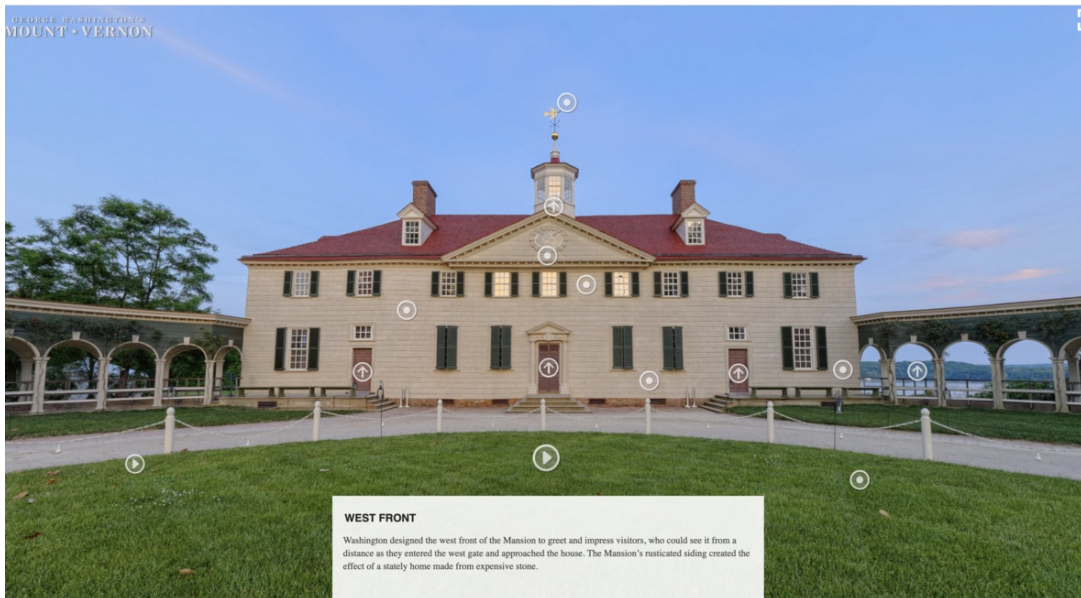
The oldest original deed in the Museum's collection is one from James Benedict to James Beebe, conveying land in the area which is now near Fry's Corner. It is dated 10 February, 1714/15. Note the dual dating, which is common on papers of the early 18th century.

Among our deeds you will also find one which donates the original parcel of land used to create the Danbury Normal School. This was located on White Street and is now part of WCSU's Midtown Campus.

City Directories – The Museum has a fine collection of Danbury and Bethel Directories. The earliest is 1885, and the holdings range upward to about 1960. The earliest Directories are extremely fragile but are also available on microfilm.

Danbury Tax Lists – one of the Museum's premier holdings are the tax lists for Danbury. These lists date back to 1792, when the property values were still quoted in pounds sterling. Once again, the oldest lists are extremely fragile but these lists are also on microfilm.

As always, we have a number of additional resources to which we can direct you for your research. We also offer research done by our Research Specialist, Patrick Wells, (p.wells@danbury-ct.gov) at a nominal fee.



Museums From Your Couch

We're all missing museums--visiting them, seeing in person art and artifacts that tell great stories, and sharing that experience with our family and friends.

Since we're all home (and probably running out of Netflix content, eventually) here are a few Revolutionary War related museums and historic sites with great virtual tours that fit right in with this weekend's anniversary of the Raid on Danbury by Tryon's British troops on April 26, 1777.

[Fraunces Tavern Museum](#) in New York City is so close and such a great visit, both virtually and in person.

[Saratoga Battlefield](#) (part of the US National Park system) and Danbury have one important person in common, Benedict Arnold, who was then still "the hero" of both events. While not as immersive as some of the other virtual tours, it's still informative and you have the option of the Saratoga Battle Monument tour and the Schuylers Mansion (all you Hamilton fans will recognize this name) tour, too.

[Mount Vernon](#) is an important touchstone in American history and they have a really spectacular virtual tour. It's not quite the same as sitting on the back verandah looking out at the Potomac, but it's close.

If you prefer naval history, the [USS Constitution museum](#) has a great website with tours and educational resources, too. "Old Ironsides" is also a great day out when we're able to visit museums again.

And there is of course [Colonial Williamsburg](#). Their easy to navigate website is beautiful and educational.

Enjoy--and remember that there are zero calories when snacks are consumed whilst watching educational programming.



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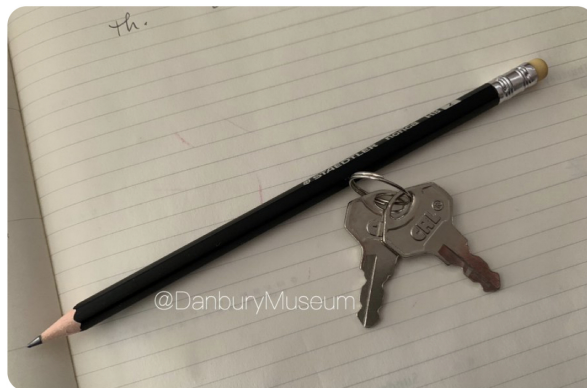


[#Archive30](#) day 23 is [#SomethingSmall](#).

A set of exhibit case keys somehow made it home with me and they are nearby, visible on my workspace, as a kind of touchstone. [#notsosmall](#)

[#workingfromhome](#)

[#MuseumFromHome](#)

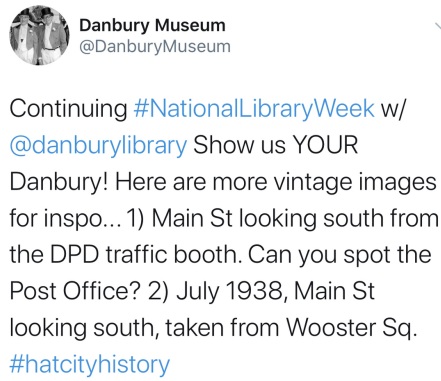


@DanburyMuseum Social Media

We consider ourselves incredibly fortunate to be able to work from home and share photos, postcards, and [#hiddenhistory](#) with you all. Sometimes, though, little things like the exhibit case

keys that migrated to *Maison de Michele*, well, they remind us that we miss being at the museum and sharing our exhibits and collections with you all.

Missing out on our museum social media feeds? Click on the buttons below and we'll get you connected with us.



Follow @DanburyMuseum on Twitter

Follow @DanburyMuseum on Instagram

Follow Danbury Museum & Historical Society on Facebook



Documenting COVID-19

At the Danbury Museum, we've been collecting and archiving items that document our city's past for **more than 75 years**. Our collection includes several buildings worth of archival materials as well as artifacts that tell the tale(s) of our collective past, that inspire and inform the present and that we will be preserving for future scholars, researchers, students and Danburians.

We are currently living through a momentous, somber moment in our collective history. We need your help to document what is going on in your homes, at your jobs, and in communities across Connecticut. We want to hear your story. We want to know how you and your family are experiencing the current pandemic and "new normal."

Below are examples of what we're looking for:

Writings - letters, notes, emails, postcards, poems

Signage - images of window signs, directions, posted community information

Photos - of you, your family, your neighborhood, your street, YOUR Danbury!

Drawings, paintings, and other forms of art you're creating and documenting

Short videos (limited to 500MB file size) for larger files please email to Patrick Wells, Research

Specialist, at p.wells@danbury-ct.gov.

Please stay safe when documenting these historic times. Do not put yourself in danger when capturing photographs or videos.

Why is this Important?

The Danbury Museum collects material that documents the full range of our lives in Danbury, CT because...you INSPIRE us, you INSPIRE the future. Documenting our community response to COVID-19 is a way to preserve the daily struggles of our stay at home community, our work from home community, our students, our critical care and healthcare workers, our first responders and our essential workers. From every perspective, what you are doing right now matters, to us right now, and to future Danburians.

So, when you email Collections Manager, Michele Lee Amundsen at m.amundsen@danbury-ct.gov or mail us your submissions to 43 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810, please include any or all of the following information:

What else should we know about this object? Please explain who is in the photo, why you created this piece...basically all the information YOU would want to see to give context to a museum exhibition item or an archival file.

Please know that:

By providing my material to the Danbury Museum & Historical Society Authority (DMHSA) I hereby give the DMHSA a royalty-free, non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, and fully sub-licensable license to copy, digitize, reproduce, edit, translate, create derivative works, distribute, and publicly display and perform certain materials described below. I agree that the DMHSA may add the material to the collection according to the DMHSA Collection Management Policy and to make it available to researchers in a manner consistent with the practices of the DMHSA. I agree that the DMHSA may utilize any medium or media now existing or that will exist in the future to achieve the above-described purposes.

Thank YOU for entrusting the Danbury Museum with your memories, your stories, your art, your images. We take this responsibility seriously and will maintain your gift for future generations so they too may understand what it was like to be here, in Danbury, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 health crisis has had a strong impact on the Danbury Museum, not unlike other public service organizations. To help us continue doing the work we love--from home and from behind the scenes over the next few months--please consider making a donation. Your gift, regardless of size, is important to us as we regroup and continue to work toward eventually reopening to the public.

[Donate here.](#)

[Become a member here.](#)

We'll keep in touch, and we hope you will, too. Be well, take care of yourselves, and we'll look

forward to meeting here again next week.



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