

# LIVING HISTORY



## President's Message

Whether you have lived in Ridgefield for three months or all your life, the Ridgefield Historical Society welcomes you. We are the repository of the stories of people who have lived here over the centuries, who contributed to the town we all love today. For newcomers, we provide the background: our archives are filled with photos and documents — letters, deeds, ledgers, etc. — that can broaden understanding of the people who may have lived on the land where you now make your home. For longtime residents and those who were born here, we are the place where you can share materials that should not be lost. We want those old photos (and we love particularly to have identifications of the subjects) and documents.



*Just off heavily traveled Grove Street, at 4 Sunset Lane, sits an eye-catching red saltbox house, a 21st Century remnant of the Town of Ridgefield's early days.*

It is the home of the Ridgefield Historical Society. Beneath this antique building known as the David Scott House is a trove of Ridgefield history, preserved in a state-of-the-art vault. Every week, dedicated volunteers continue identifying and cataloguing the materials — documents, ledgers, photographs, brochures and much more — that the organization acquires.

Through its collections, the Ridgefield Historical Society preserves for all residents and historians, present and future, the story of a remarkable place, and the people who have lived here over the centuries. It's a never-ending story, as each week new items are added, many donated by townspeople.

The mission statement is simple: "The Society's purpose is to preserve, interpret, and foster public knowledge of Ridgefield's historical, cultural, and architectural heritage."

Please make use of the searchable archive available on our [website](#) and visit the Scott House to make use of our extensive history and genealogy library. We are here to make Ridgefield history live.

— Sharon Dunphy, President,  
Ridgefield Historical Society

## A home for history

The Scott House itself is a testament to historic preservation. Built in the early 18th Century by an Irish immigrant, David Scott, the building over the centuries belonged to Dauchys and Rockwells, Lounsbury's and Meads, more Scotts from the original family and Scotts who were no relation. It came finally to the Addressi family, late in the 20th Century, when the Addressis purchased what's known as the "Scott Block" on Main Street. By then, the Scott House had been moved from its original Main Street location to just down Catoonah Street.

When preserving the old house was no longer economically feasible, the Addressi family worked with the Ridgefield Preservation Trust and its dedicated volunteers, who had the house disassembled and stored until it could be rebuilt as the home of the new Ridgefield Historical Society. An initial donation from the Addressi family helped secure the house until fund-raising made it possible to raise the roof again.

In September 2002, the Scott House was dedicated and opened. The house includes a large fireproof and waterproof archival room within a "vault" with special equipment to control the humidity and temperature for fragile documents.

The headquarters also features a reception and reference room, where the public can access databases of history materials held town-wide. There is also a meeting room, a library, a project room, the town historian's office, a cataloguing area, and a kitchenette.

The society welcomes volunteers to assist with its work and also welcomes members and donors to support its efforts.



The Scott House, when it stood on Main Street.



## The Schoolhouse

The Society also operates and maintains the Peter Parley Schoolhouse, on West Lane, where activities include a schedule of family-friendly docent-guided open houses and presentations. Private tours are also available.

Sometimes known as the Little Red Schoolhouse or the West Lane Schoolhouse, the building is leased from the Town of Ridgefield. The 19th Century red schoolhouse is just off West Lane (Route 35) and has been restored and interpreted by volunteers to give visitors a taste of how a district school educated Ridgefield's children at

the turn of the 20th Century. The school carries the nom de plume of Samuel G. Goodrich who grew up nearby on High Ridge and attended this school and later became a prolific and well known author of school books for children.

## A home for research

The Ridgefield Historical Society is a resource for genealogists and historians and for townspeople who'd like to know more about their neighborhoods and their homes. Students can access original source materials and everyone has access to information in the archives through the searchable database on the [website](http://ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org), ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org.

With the primary goal of preserving documentation of the town's history, the Society is always interested in receiving donations of appropriate materials.

The Society welcomes and encourages donations of:

- Photographs, postcards and other images of Ridgefield and its people.
- Documents that shed light on any aspect of Ridgefield history.
- Diaries and letters by Ridgefielders, especially those that tell something about life in the town or the people who lived here.
- Maps of Ridgefield or properties in town.
- Advertisements for historic houses, estates, and businesses.
- Books containing information on Ridgefield or its residents.
- Records of past businesses or organizations.

Space is limited, however, and the Society may not be able to accept all donations. Prospective donors are asked to call ahead to discuss what materials they would like to donate.

Guests are welcomed at the Scott House, which is open to the public Tuesday through Thursday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m. There's a small gift shop.

The Ridgefield Historical Society sponsors numerous educational programs, events, and exhibits throughout the year. Visit our website at [ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org) for more information.

## Coming events

Silhouettes by Deborah O'Connor will be offered at the Scott House on Sunday, Dec. 2, from 11 to 5. For more information and reservations, call 203-438-5821.

A Festive Soiree at the Schoolhouse on Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information and reservations, call 203-438-5821 or email [ridgefieldhistory@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ridgefieldhistory@sbcglobal.net). Tickets may be purchased online at our website [ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org).