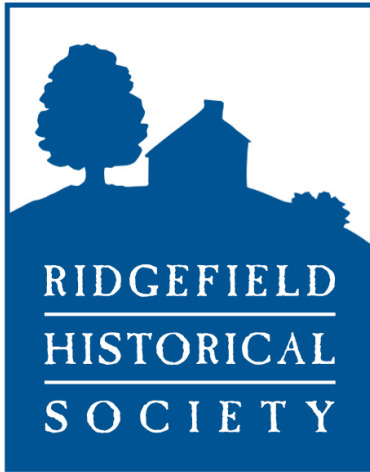


SCOTT HOUSE JOURNAL



President's Message

I hope this letter finds you all well and adapting to the stresses of daily life during a pandemic. No doubt these are challenging times, but our mission to preserve Ridgefield history continues unabated. Hopefully you are enjoying our weekly eBlasts and other electronic communications.

We want you to keep focused not only on remembering our past, but also preserving our experiences in the present. As we all know: today's events are tomorrow's history. Please continue to save items and stories that reflect how you have been experiencing the pandemic. We will put out a call for these items when we can safely receive them. Meanwhile, keep collecting, and if you would like to tell us how your life has changed, consider sending us a short video about your experiences. (Directions about submitting videos are on our website.)

Stay safe and keep cool,
Warm regards,

Sara Champion, President

History is now

Documenting the pandemic

The Ridgefield Historical Society board and officers recognized the challenges the organization would face when the Covid-19 pandemic brought everyday life to a halt in March.

Not only was the Scott House closing, bringing to a halt onsite work with archives, research, and the many other activities that brought our volunteers and staff together regularly, but our programming and exhibits would suddenly have to be re-examined and revised.

Within days of the mid-March shutdown, it was clear that this was a historic event that the Historical Society would need to respond to on many different fronts.

The practical matters had to be attended to: staff members prepared to work from home and notified all volunteers that the Scott House was closed. The cleaner was told not to come in, the mail was forwarded, and a new way of working was about to begin.

The board and officers quickly formed a Crisis





The new normal for board and committee meetings was a Zoom call; the video-conferencing program not only made doing the Ridgefield Historical Society's business easier to conduct, it enabled the video presentations that are a big part of the Society's real-time response to the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Committee and began weekly meetings using the video-conferencing program Zoom. Plans for a spring membership drive focused on recent members who had not renewed in the fall were put on hold, and all current memberships were extended through Aug. 31.

To bolster the Historical Society's finances, the Committee, led by President Sara Champion, and Development and Marketing Director Kathryn Tufano began looking at special grants the government and other entities were offering during the pandemic. The Society successfully applied for and received a Payroll Protection Program loan from the federal government and a \$2,500 CARES Act Humanities Relief Grant from Connecticut Humanities, an independent, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Fairfield County Bank also added its support to the Historical Society with a \$2500 grant. Other grants are being pursued.

In January, after a late 2019 discovery of skeletons possibly associated with the Battle of Ridgefield, the Ridgefield Historical Society submitted a grant proposal to the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program. The two-year project will begin studies of the entire area of the battle, which was the only inland engagement of the Revolutionary War in Connecticut and an important event in the long conflict. The grant proposal was approved and announced in June, and work begins this summer to launch the Phase I work. The Battle of Ridgefield study will create a framework on which to base further research and the results will become part of the Ridgefield Historical Society's permanent collection.

The hard-working archives volunteers, who had been gathering every week at the Scott House, no longer had access to the materials they'd been cataloguing and assessing. To keep them engaged, Betsy Reid, with Monica McMorran and Kay Ables, who head the archives committees, came up with a digital project. Since the Ridgefield Historical Society's collection is accessible online, the volunteers began a systematic program of combing through each entry to find any errors in the records. Their efforts are adding to the value of the digital archives, a resource that's available to anyone on the Ridgefield Historical Society website.

Both the Programming Committee and a new Covid-19 Archival Project Committee took up the challenge of keeping the Ridgefield Historical Society actively engaged with the community. Since virtual programming was now the main option, the Programming volunteers revisited what had been planned and decided how to repurpose it. For example, the year-long Votes for Women celebration included a just-opened exhibit, Votes for Women: The Road to Victory, a series of 11 panels illustrating the history of the woman suffrage movement. The Votes for Women programs, with funding from CT Humanities and Fairfield County Bank, had been planned by the Historical Society, the League of Women Voters of Ridgefield, the Ridgefield Library, the Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center, and the Drum Hill

Chapter of the DAR. Representatives of the Historical Society and League of Women Voters of Ridgefield were responsible for the exhibit, which opened on March 1. In order to give the exhibit an audience when the venue, the Ridgefield Library, was closed, the individual panels became a weekly feature on the Historical Society website, with explanations of each panel's elements. Inside the Exhibit, showed the breadth of materials that were incorporated to illustrate



Detail, Ridgefield Historical Society website

aspects of the woman suffrage campaign, from the national efforts to the contemporaneous reactions of Ridgefielders.

In addition, Kathryn Tufano quickly took up the challenge of creating Zoom videos for ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org and created a series on how the panels came together with graphic designer and artist Bill Mikulewicz.

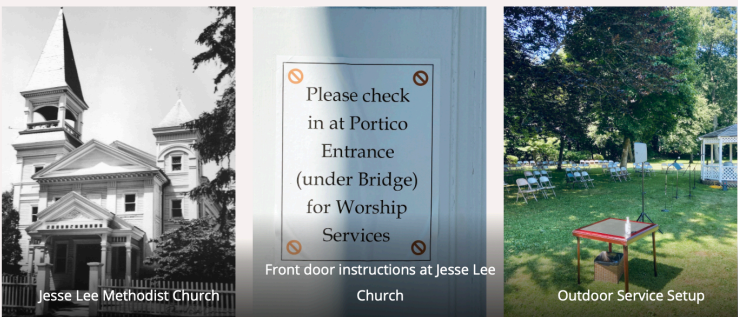
Ridgefield Garden Club historian and archivist Terry McManus participated in a Zoom interview for the website and provided online programs on the Ballard Greenhouse and the Garden and Conservation Trust; she also created presentations on Anne S. Richardson and the Richardson Estate and Gardens.

Other Ridgefield women are celebrated in Dr. Darla Shaw’s video series, Change Agents: Ridgefield Women to be Remembered, who range from renowned suffragist Alice Paul to Mary Mallon, known as “Typhoid Mary.” Dr. Shaw, a well known educator, created vivid portrayals of these women, based on her own research.

One of the goals of the Covid-19 Archival Project is to gather as many personal accounts of the pandemic experience as possible. The committee has developed a continually expanding collection of videos, mainly done using Zoom, that present the real challenges and situations faced by Ridgefielders of all stripes. Among them is a heart-felt account of a Ridgefield doctor who helped patients breathe in a New York hospital’s ICU during the height of the crisis. Another is Ridgefield First Selectman

Rudy Marconi’s frank and moving story of his own siege with the virus. The video project is ongoing, as is the collection of materials, from samples of masks to official orders to photographs of how stores have had to adjust their services. The committee is encouraging Ridgefielders to submit accounts of their

Examples of Images Submitted to the COVID-19 Archival Project:



Jesse Lee Methodist Church

Front door instructions at Jesse Lee Church

Outdoor Service Setup

Thanks for visiting our website and staying connected with us and local history.

JULY 22, 2020

Documenting Ridgefield’s Response to COVID-19: Pastor Bill Pfohl of Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church

Pastor Bill Pfohl of Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church speaks about how the church is responding to the needs of others while continuing to hold worship services.

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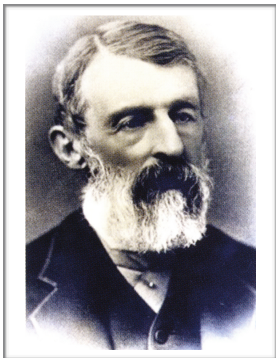
An example from the Ridgefield Historical Society website of a video documenting the community response to the Covid-19 pandemic: The Rev. Bill Pfohl of Jesse Lee United Methodist Church described all the changes his congregation has made and how they are helping each other.

experiences via a portal on the Historical Society website and to hold physical materials until a time when they can be safely received at the Scott House.

The story of the Covid-19 pandemic is still being written and the end is not yet certain, but the Ridgefield Historical Society is working to make sure that it will be documented for future Ridgefielders, who will undoubtedly face unique challenges of their own and may benefit from learning how early 21st Century citizens coped with a worldwide viral outbreak.

Heading for the Hall of Fame, with a little help from friends

Daniel Lucius Adams, M.D. (1814-1899), a well-known and successful Ridgefielder in his day, was one of the founders of the sport we know as baseball. He wrote the seminal “Laws of Base Ball” in 1857 and was himself a renowned player, manager and president of the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York.



Daniel Lucius Adams, M.D.

Cornelia Adams, his wife

In Ridgefield, where he moved in 1865, Dr. Adams was a state representative, a founder and first president of the Ridgefield Savings Bank (now Fairfield County Bank), and the first president of the Ridgefield Library, among his many civic contributions. He had mostly retired from his baseball endeavors, although he did play in occasional “old timers” games. Later in life, Dr. Adams relocated his family to New Haven, where he died in 1899.

To the dismay of his family and his many fans and supporters among those who study the early baseball era, the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., has yet to add ‘Doc’ Adams to its ranks. The Early Baseball Committee considers inductees at its meeting every tenth year. At its meeting this December, candidates will be selected for 2021 induction.



A petition in support of “Doc” Adams is available online at <https://docadamsbaseball.org/the-petition/> and his granddaughter Marjorie Adams, who has spearheaded the campaign to enshrine her grandfather, urges all who are interested in baseball and its origins to read and sign the petition. Marjorie reports that Doc missed this honor by one vote last time and notes the importance of the petition; she’ll talk about her grandfather in a video presentation that will be posted on our website, <https://ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org> on Aug. 20.

Grants boost Historical Society's efforts

The work of exploring and preserving Ridgefield history has been expanded in 2020 by several grants received by the Ridgefield Historical Society. Each one was preceded by a carefully thought-out application, detailing how the funds would be used and providing a rationale for the proposed expenditures.

Since January, these have included the National Park Service's American Battlefield Preservation program two-year grant of \$50,150; the CARES Act Humanities Relief Act administered by CT Humanities, \$2,500; Fairfield County Bank grant, \$2,500; and the Anne S. Richardson Fund two-year capital grant of \$60,000. (During the 2019-20 fiscal year, the Society also received a \$10,000 grant from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop, \$1,500 from the Wadsworth Lewis Trust, and \$3,979 to date (\$995 pending) from a CT Humanities Quick Grant.)

Grants fund specific program initiatives and capital improvements and repairs. The Historical Society depends on the support of its members to provide funds for its operating expenses.

Ridgefield Historical Society

The Scott House, 4 Sunset Lane

203-438-5821

ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org

Headquarters closed to the public until further notice because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Find us on Facebook #RidgefieldHistoricalSociety and on #RidgefieldStreams

Please consider joining us as a member or renewing your membership today! At this very difficult time, we need your support now more than ever. For more information, visit <https://ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org/member/>.

Thank you! Your contribution means so much.