



A NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM
 624 SOUTH BRITAIN ROAD | SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT 06488

Old Town Hall Museum
 Wednesdays 10—Noon
 Other hours by appt:
 (203) 405-3124

Museum Administrator:
 Leigh Graham

Archivist:
 Kimberly Neuenschwander

South Britain Library
 Tuesdays 6—8 PM
 (203) 232-9874

Librarian: Robin Stiles

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 2015—2016

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Major Renovations at the Old Town Hall Museum and South Britain Library

Driving down South Britain Road one cannot miss the major renovations happening outside the Old Town Hall Museum and South Britain Library. Exterior renovations began in early October, including a new roof and painting to both historic buildings. Interior renovations to the South Britain Library include new lighting. The exterior colors of the Library will remain dark green with white trim, while the Old Town Hall Museum will be restored to its original color of beige with dark green and red trim. The original colors were discovered in 1999—2001 by a preservation consultant who analyzed eight layers of paint samples. A photograph discovered in the archives from 1874 (next newsletter) supports the discovery of the original colors. The renovations are funded by a town-matched grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. Many thanks to Jay Carow of the Historic Buildings Commission who authored the grant. Coinciding with the exterior renovations, interior exhibits in the Museum have been removed. Over the coming winter the interior will receive new paint, exhibits, and a climate control system funded by the Historical Society. The Museum remains closed to the public and for research until the second week of December. We thank everyone for their patience during the renovations and look forward to sharing our “new” museum soon!



Museum's new roof



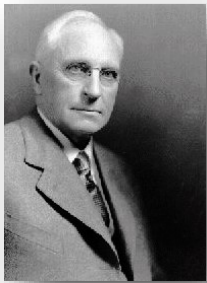
Museum stripped and ready for painting



Library roof replacement and primed for paint

In September, the SHS installed a new exhibit in the Brinker Fireplace Room at the Southbury Library. The exhibit focuses on the early history of Southbury's district schools and daily life for students in the mid-19th century. Artifacts on display, loaned from the Old Town Hall Museum and Bullet Hill School, include a replica of the 1868 Beer's map of Southbury, along with a variety of books, photographs, and children's recess toys. The exhibit will run through the end of January.

Southbury Notables: Wallace Nutting



Wallace Nutting was born in Rockbottom, Massachusetts on November 17, 1861 to Albion and Elizabeth Nutting. Albion died fighting in the Civil War in October 1864. In 1865 the family's home was lost to fire, so Elizabeth moved Nutting and his older sister to Industry, Maine, to live at the home of her brother. After graduating from Augusta Maine High School and Philips-Exeter Academy, Nutting continued his studies at Harvard University, Hartford Theological Seminary, and Union Theological Seminary. He graduated with his Doctorate of Divinity Degree from Whitman College in 1893. In 1938, he received an honorary doctorate in Humanities from Washington and Jefferson College. Nutting married Mariet Griswold of Buckland, Massachusetts on June 5, 1888.

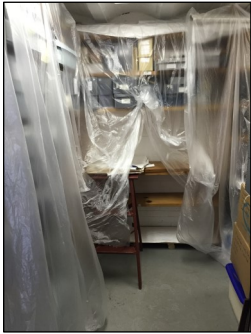
Nutting's career as a Congregationalist minister transferred him throughout the United States, retiring in 1904 for health-related reasons. Nutting and his wife often engaged in long bicycle rides throughout the countryside as a means for him to recover his health and practice his hobby of photography. This relaxing lifestyle soon became a way for him to earn a living. In 1904, Nutting opened an art prints studio in NYC. A year later he relocated to Southbury, moving to a house he called "Nuttinghame" (currently the Meeting House at Heritage Village). He soon expanded his business and converted his barn into a studio where a group of women, known as colorists, hand colored his photographs. Colorists would often sign Nutting's name to a print, explaining the variations in his signature.

By 1912 Nutting's photography catalog included approximately 900 images, also known as "Nuttings," and the studio soon outgrew his Southbury home. Nutting and his colorists relocated to Framingham, MA. This new location was coined "Nuttingholme." During this time Nutting expanded his business to include antique furniture reproduction. He retired in 1922, selling his photography and furniture businesses. However, Nutting became displeased with how the companies were operating, so he came out of retirement two years later to repurchase both businesses. Nutting also authored more than a dozen books on various subjects, such as his travels throughout the United States and Europe and reproduction furniture. He published his autobiography in 1936.

Wallace Nutting died in Massachusetts on July 19, 1941 and is buried in Augusta, Maine.

Correction: On Page 2 of the Summer 2015 newsletter, the scholarship amount awarded to Southbury high school graduate Jessica N. Hicks should read \$2500, not \$1000.

*From the Vault: You Never Know What You'll
Find Buried Deep Within the Archives*



No *From the Vault* article this newsletter as the archives is currently packed and awaiting installation of a new climate control system. The new system, which will also be installed in the museum, will help combat the extreme fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Left unregulated, these fluctuations lead to mold growth and accelerated deterioration in documents and photographs. The new ductless HVAC system will help preserve and prolong Southbury's history for future generations! Stay tuned for a history of the Old Town Hall Museum in the next newsletter.

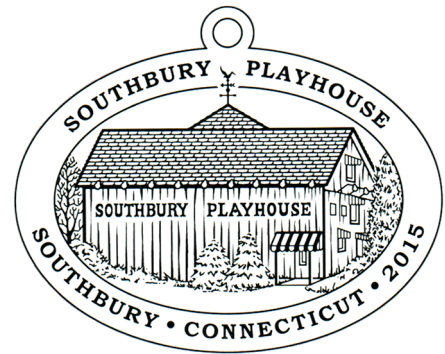
Whether it was through donations or purchases, the SHS would like to thank our supporters for making our 7th Annual Attic Sale on September 19—20 a success. A special thank you to the volunteers and members who dedicated their hard work and time.

2015 Ornament: Southbury Playhouse

The Southbury Historical Society offers a new ornament commemorating the Southbury Playhouse. The 2015 ornament is the 28th in a series dating to 1987. Produced by Woodbury Pewter and designed by Laurel Casazza, the ornament features the image of the Southbury Playhouse at Playhouse Corner.

Housed inside a barn built on a former Hicock property, one of the earliest settlers of Southbury, the Southbury Playhouse opened in the early 1950's under professional ballet dancer Jack Quinn. Director W. Thomas Littleton bought the Playhouse in 1968 and directed more than 500 shows during his ownership. The Playhouse served as a cultural boon to Southbury and brought many artists, actors, and celebrities to the area. Due to a shortage of hotels and restaurants, celebrities would often stay with local townspeople during a show's run. Local high school students were also hired as ushers and valets. Notable actors include Ed Sullivan, Tom Poston, and Don Murray. The Southbury Playhouse closed its doors permanently in 1985 and was demolished in 1989.

The ornaments are \$12 each and are available for purchase at the following locations: Southbury Town Clerk's Office, H.H. Stone & Sons, and the Old Town Hall Museum (to re-open the second week of December).



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The Southbury Historical Society
Wishes You a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

