



Derby Historical Society NEWS LETTER

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A Valley VOICE Publication

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Welcome to the *Derby Historical Society Newsletter*



On behalf of the DHS board, I am happy to announce the launch of the inaugural issue of the Derby Historical Society newsletter.

Few today know the dynamic history of the Naugatuck Valley towns of Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, & Shelton - we want to showcase the rich history of the area from the Colonial era through modern days.

Go [HERE](#) to subscribe and receive every issue in your inbox. Thank you!

Ralph Villers
Publicity Committee

Society's work continues despite challenge of pandemic

By Ralph Villers

ANSONIA - This year's virtual Derby Historical Society annual meeting happened after a year grappling with unimagined challenges.

Yet, despite a pandemic that cancelled many events hosted by DHS, the society rethought and reimagined the programs it offered. And by doing so, it found unrealized opportunities.

Executive Director Daniel Bosques addressed the changes required by government imposed restrictions.

"We realigned ourselves to meet the needs of the public and. So we worked harder than ever to make our organization as accessible as ever" he said.

"We're happy to still be here serving as the region's historical society".

Some of the challenges included losing traditional fundraising campaigns and in-person programming. However, a number of innovations were instituted:

- A new virtual field trip for the fall session of *A Day in 1762* made possible through a grant from the Valley Community Foundation. This virtual experience is currently free of charge for to 5th-grade students in the towns we serve.
- Another virtual program *Tuesday Tours at Ten* was created until in-person open house events became possible.
- The DHS website is being redesigned to a more user-friendly platform.
- Robert Novak, former DHS Executive Director led *Yesterday's Headlines*, co-sponsored with Derby Public Library
- Created the *Valley Industrial Exhibit* on the DHS property.

Bosques ended the meeting by reiterating the continuing role of the DHS: "We look forward to continuing to make *history* while celebrating our diverse past."

Derby Historical Society



"Mistress Wheeler and Mistress Bassett"

2019-2020 Annual Report
April 2021

Click on photo to read the
annual report

The Mansfield House in Ansonia takes us back to its Colonial roots

The Rev. Richrd Mansfield house on Jewett Street in Ansonia, built in the early 1700s, retains its colonial style.



The photo on the left was taken in 1963, on the right in 2015.

Mansfield was the first resident Church of England clergyman in Derby.

He lived from 1724 to 1820 and served for 72 years, a period marking the longest rectorship recorded in the United States.

The Derby Historical Society will cover more of this local historical landmark in an upcoming issue.



Derby Historical Society shows off Valley train display

ANSONIA - Drivers passing by the historic David Humphreys House on Elm Street probably wouldn't notice the non-descript gray building in back.

Yet inside, a bustling depiction of the Lower Naugatuck Valley in 1918 is seen in *Derby Junction*, an 'N Scale' ***model train layout***.

The layout had been bequeathed in 2001 to the historical society by Benjamin Bacon, whose family once owned the former Bacon Printing Co. in Derby.

It was transported to the Valley from Florida and placed in a new climate-controlled building behind the David Humphreys house in 2015.

The L-shaped layout measures about eight by 12-feet and contains 100 buildings, as well as bridges and trees.

Bacon had researched the railroad lines and the physical characteristics of Ansonia, Derby, and Shelton to create the train layout.

As nice as the railroad layout currently looks, the society plans to upgrade the exhibit.

With Rich DiCarlo, Valley Art Council President and Ansonia Cultural Commission member, the DHS will be expanding the train diorama in what will be an industrial-themed building display.

Please keep up with the upgrades and other exciting subjects by ***subscribing*** to the Derby Historical Society Newsletter.

