



The Preservationist

FALL 2011

CELEBRATE RIVERSIDE PARK SEPT. 17-18!

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Julie Bennett-Jones

Address

New London Landmarks

49 Washington Street

P.O. Box 1134

New London, CT 06320

(860) 442-0003

Email:

info@

newlondonlandmarks.org

Web Site:

newlondonlandmarks.org

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

The Preservationist

Editor

Sandra Kersten Chalk



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It's a beautiful park!
It's an interesting historic neighborhood!
Don't believe everything you hear...

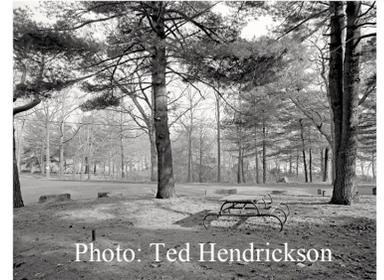


Photo: Ted Hendrickson

Come and see for yourself on Saturday & Sunday, September 17 & 18

Neighborhood Walking Tours — Nature Walk in the Park — Children's Games
Artists & Photographers *En Plein Air* — Bike New London "Ride to the Park"

On Saturday : (Sponsored by New London Landmarks)

Landmarks leads 2 Walking Tours: \$15. for one or both tours

1:00 meet at the new Winthrop Science School on Grove Avenue for a walk-around Bolles, Rosemary, Crystal and into the Park

2:00 join Glenn Dreyer, Director of Connecticut College Arboretum, for a Nature Walk through the park—(free)

3:00 meet at the corner of Adelaide & Crystal (the entrance to the Park) and walk-around Adelaide, Terrace, Crystal, Stanners streets

On Saturday and Sunday:

11:30—3:30 join activities in the park— lots of music, children's games, Bike New London Ride to the Park, *En Plein Air* Artists and Photographers roam the park and neighborhood. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 8, 2011

The preservation of New London's historic and cultural resources is the primary mission of New London Landmarks. Our Spring 2011 issue provides background and history about Riverside Park, when we named it "Most Endangered" at our Annual Meeting.

On Tuesday, November 8, 2011, New London will hold an historic election. Although the race for a new "strong" mayor is getting the most attention; another ballot question is about the sale of Riverside Park. The exact wording on the ballot will be:

"Shall the City of New London sell a portion of Riverside Park to the Federal Government?"

New London Landmarks urges all New Londoners to consider this question as carefully as you consider your vote for Mayor—it is equally important to the future of New London.

SARAH KEMBLE KNIGHT

BY JULIE BENNETT-JONES



The Antientest Burial Place—or as Joshua Hempstead referred to it; “the burying place” is a beautiful hillside cemetery dating from the city founding in 1646 and is a fascinating place to visit. Following is a brief history of one of the people buried here; Sarah Kemble Knight.

Many people know of the famous diarist from New London, Joshua Hempstead whose detailed notes, spanning a forty year period from 1711 to 1758, provide one of the finest sources of information on daily colonial

life available. New London, however, can claim another famous journal keeping resident, Sarah Kemble Knight. Her famous diary recounted her journey on horseback from Boston to New York City and back again from 1704-1705 when she was thirty-eight years old. Not only was this no small feat at the time, but a fairly unheard of undertaking for a woman.

The journal of Sarah Kemble Knight provides a detailed account of her journey where she spares no details, criticisms, or complaints of her trials and travails. Traveling via the Boston Post Road she accompanied a post messenger or other guides, but often struggled to keep pace. She incorporates humor and vivid descriptions of the people and locations along her route.

After leaving Stonington and making her way to New London on October 5, her entry reads:

“About seven that Evening, we come to New London Ferry: here, by reason of a very high wind, we mett with great difficulty in getting over—the Boat tos’t exceedingly, and our Horses capper’d at a very surprising Rate, and set us all in a fright...Being safely arrived at the house of Mrs. Prentices in N. London...and between nine and ten at night waited on the Revd Mr. Gurdon Saltonstall, minster of the town, who kindly Invited me to Stay that night at his house, where I was very handsomely and plentifully treated and Lodg’d; and made good the Great Character I had before heard concerning him: viz. that hee was the most affable, courteous, Genero’s and best of men.”

On her return journey she again stayed at the home of Rev. Saltonstall on January 6 and remarks that she stayed a day longer than intended in New London because of the:

“commands of the Honorable Governor Winthrop to stay and take supper with him whose wonderful civility I may not omit.”

Published in 1825, her diary is still available in print and a noted source of information about colonial life and travel. Interestingly, all records and resources show the original diary to be lost. Sarah, born in 1666, became a teacher and businesswoman. During the time of her famous trip in 1704 she was living in Boston, but moved to Connecticut ten years later upon the marriage of her only child, Elizabeth, to John Livingston of New London. In her day, she was noted as a woman of considerable distinction, according to Frances M. Caulkins in her [History of New London, Connecticut](#). Sarah owned two farms in Mohegan with housing and mills, an estate in Norwich, and farms in New London’s North Parish (today the Montville area). Sarah died in 1727 and was brought to New London for internment in the Antientest Burial Ground. Her only child, Elizabeth, died in 1735 and is also buried there, her grave marked by a large tablestone.



Elizabeth Livingston

Sarah Knight

WHY SHOULD THE CITY KEEP RIVERSIDE PARK?

This is a valid question with several answers. From a preservationist point of view, Landmarks is concerned with the neighborhood next to the park—it is an historic, working class neighborhood laid out in the late 1800s. The homes were constructed by local builders and purchased by Polish and other middle-European families who mostly worked on the railroads or the grand steamships plying Long Island Sound.

This neighborhood is all that is left of East New London, demolished by the construction of the first bridge in 1943, Urban Renewal in the 1960s and the construction of the second bridge and huge interchanges in the early 1970s.

At that time the City seems to have simply abandoned the neighborhood and ceased to properly maintain the park (or even place signs to show people where the park is). Even Winthrop School became overcrowded with trailers for classrooms.

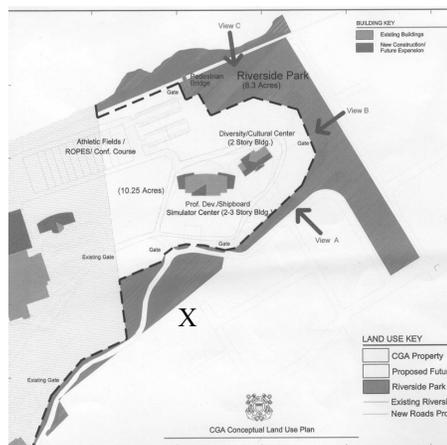
Now, 30 years later, Winthrop School will become a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Magnet School for the region and the Coast Guard wishes to expand their campus into the center of Riverside Park.

We believe the neighborhood and the city need Riverside Park for the future of an expanding and vital urban center. We urge New London voters to think carefully about this important vote.

FACTS ABOUT THE PARK SALE

This is a map of the park showing the white area in the center of the park that will be taken by the Coast Guard Academy if New London voters vote to sell.

In 1915 Riverside Park had 52 acres of land with an active waterfront. Today Riverside Park is only 18.6 acres and the Coast Guard Academy is asking to buy 9.6 acres.



1) The narrow strip at the top of the map is the waterfront area. It is connected to the park by a condemned pedestrian bridge over the Vermont Railroad tracks. Remediation of the waterfront is essential and a new or repaired bridge required for use.

2) Currently no roads access the beach area from the area of the park remaining to New London. New access, through sharp granite slopes, will need to be built from Adelaide Street.

3) Steep granite slopes from the proposed Academy land to Adelaide Street make the area of limited use for playground equipment.

4) The new Winthrop School, (marked X) borders on Academy land. The

two dark areas are steep granite slopes with dense wood cover. They do not look accessible for students.

5) Bolles Avenue borders Riverside Park and the white line is Stanners Street, providing access to the garages owned by Bolles Avenue property owners. On the far side of Stanners Street the land drops off sharply and is of no use as parkland. The narrow tail is where Stanners Street becomes Riverside Heights Drive,

6) That leaves New London with the dark strip bordering Adelaide Street on the right. Only part of it is flat with a few trees. On the left of that strip Stanners Street rises sharply on a granite hill. There are four houses on the left side of Stanners Street and a drop off to the flat land on the right. As Stanners turns left there would be the opportunity to have a small viewing area looking past the Coast Guard Academy development to the Thames River.

2011 MEMBERS JOINING FROM APRIL TO AUGUST

Are you *passionate* about New London? Be sure to join friends and neighbors AND join Landmarks
Become a *passionate* member!

Individual	Bud McAllister Molly McKay Hubert W. Ryan George Spreccace Elizabeth Whitley Melvin Woody	Contributor Douglas Braun Marian R. Shilstone
John Philip Anthony Mary Beth Baker Sandra Chalk Julie Bennett-Jones Susan Davis Jennifer Hillhouse HOPE, Inc. Anna & George King Hildred H. Lasser Carolyn Leuze	Family Linda & Tom English Myron Hendel Richard Luldgin	Patron Baratz Realty Brian Kent
		Corporate/Business Harbour Towers

A Membership year in New London Landmarks is from April 1st through March 31st.

Benefits of membership include receiving copies of *The Preservationist*, postcards and mailings about special events and, most importantly, support for our work to preserve and protect New London's historic urban landscape, homes and buildings.

**Individual: \$25 Family: \$35 Contributor: \$50—\$75 Patron: \$100 and above
 Corporate: \$200 and above**

FALL 2011 SCHEDULE

**Thursday, October 13—The Future of Riverside Park. At the Pilot House, Ocean Beach
 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Sponsored by New London Landmarks & the Neighborhood Alliance

The goal is to bring information about the future of Riverside Park to New London citizens. The Forum will be moderated by Norman Garrick, Director of UConn's Center for Transportation and Urban Planning. Additional speakers from the community will provide information on plans for how Riverside Park can be used in the future; the importance of the park to the new Winthrop Science Magnet School whose location next to the park played a large part in the decision to make science the major theme for the school; and other issues that need to be considered when citizens decide how to vote.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 — Tour Cedar Grove Cemetery, led by Bill Peterson,
 Curator Emeritus of Mystic Seaport**

2:00 p.m. — \$25 members, \$30 non-members—Reservations recommended

Stroll along picturesque winding paths through this 160 year old cemetery passing architectural masterpieces of another kind. Bill Peterson will talk a little about architectural styles as represented by some of the monuments and a bit of maritime history as well as Civil War history since we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. The rolling landscape is enhanced with fine old trees, many planted when the cemetery was designed in the 1850s.

Come visit what was once a popular New London attraction! In May 1851 "A Hack could be hired from Strickland's Corner at Main and State Streets" for a 25 cent round-trip to the cemetery.

WE HAD A TEA PARTY!



This is just a hint of the fabulous High Tea treats created by board members Krystal Kornegay Rose and Rachel Pattison! Savories and Sweets galore in a beautiful historic home. Hostess Kate Wick welcomed guests and talked about her extensive renovations.



Kate Wick talks with guests



Heather Grigsby discusses the Plaque program

Heather Grigsby, Chair of our historic Whale Plaque committee talked about researching New London homes to discover the original owner and all the people who have lived in the house through the years. These popular plaques can be seen on over 200 homes in the city and can be ordered through Landmarks. We began the program in 1985 to encourage owners of historic homes to learn more about their homes. (see more information about the Plaque Program on page 7)

The Tea was such a success that we will plan another one next spring in another historic New London home.

FALL 2011 SCHEDULE

CONTINUED

OCTOBER 27, Thursday: MAYORAL CANDIDATES FORUM

Each candidate for Mayor of New London will be invited to participate in this forum, to be held at the New London Public Library meeting room. As in past years, Landmarks is interested in the opinions of candidates on issues of preservation, economic development and, especially this year, in their knowledge and understanding of the many planning initiatives that have been developed recently.

The decision to keep or sell Riverside Park and economic development plans are sure to be dominant themes. Landmarks wants to give each candidate an opportunity to address these interests - and the public an opportunity to hear their ideas.

THANKS TO THE CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CULTURE AND TOURISM

Their support continues to provide basic operational support to all our activities.



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SANDRA KERSTEN CHALK

RIVERSIDE PARK. There are various arguments for saving the park in different stories in this issue. This is my story.

I believe in the future of New London.

I believe the city can have a proactive view of its future. I believe New London can move forward with the ideas and concepts presented in the HyettPalma 2010 Action Plan; the Action Plan developed by the Cecil Group; the planning for Fort Trumbull developed by Alan Plattus of Yale Urban Design Workshop; and UConn's Re-Connect New London study which includes extensive ideas for the restoration of Riverside Park.

Each of these studies confirms the great potential inherent in the city's location along the Thames River and Long Island Sound; its central axis between New York, Hartford and Boston; the many historic attractions; an exceptional housing stock of well-built homes; and the opportunities to be found in the compact downtown, Ocean Beach Park, 3 college campuses and a transportation center offering train, interstate ferry, route 95, and bus travel.

Many of these elements come together in the small and forgotten East New London neighborhood. The historic homes were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Riverside Park was developed by the city in the late 1890s and extended by a gift to the city in 1907. Groundbreaking for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, on 100 acres of land donated by New London, took place in 1931.

Disruption to the neighborhood began in the 1940s with the Academy's first expansion along Mohegan & Oneco Avenues and Thatcher Street. In 1961 the Academy took 12 acres of the park by eminent domain (the city was ultimately paid \$35,000 for the land).

Then the bridge! And Urban Renewal!

The late 1960s and early 70s will be remembered as demolition years. A vast area between East New London and State Street simply disappeared.

We saved H.H. Richardson's Union Station and a few Bank Street buildings...

...but I digress...

TODAY I want to save Riverside Park!

I want to maintain and improve the historic East New London neighborhood. I want to see plans developed to Re-connect this area with downtown in a 10-year plan of development to include Hodges Square and seek new ways to use the area "under the bridges", enhancing the oldest industrial site in Connecticut: Winthrop's Mill.

Keeping Riverside Park for the city and its citizens is essential to this planning process. Without the park the other improvements are unlikely to happen.

The park is key to the economic viability of the East New London neighborhood. Studies prove conclusively that a neighborhood park adds 15—20% to the value of nearby homes. That's tax money for the city! Crowded urban neighborhoods thrive with open space and property values are substantially lowered without neighborhood open spaces and parks.

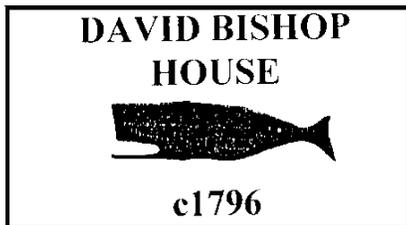
And the new Winthrop School!

Now under construction next to Riverside Park, the Winthrop Elementary School is a STEM school with an academic emphasis on **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**. A magnet school, the city must attract students from the region. In the planning stages, the adjacent Riverside Park was thought of as a natural science lab for a variety of biology and environmental studies. "... *there will be outdoor and indoor areas for the study of ecosystems, water life, wildlife and nature.*" Without the park, they will be left with a small playground.

As I said in our fund-raising and membership brochure, ***Let's get Passionate about New London!*** Let's believe in the future and recognize the future begins today!

Voting to keep Riverside Park for the citizens of New London—even if you never go there—is a vote for the future. It is a vote that recognizes the value of open space, the value of our history, the value of our neighborhoods, AND the value of our schools! New London children ARE the future of New London, they need the best education and the experience of a beautiful, natural woods with **views of the Thames River...our heritage.**

Historic Plaque Application



If your New London home/building is at least 50 years old, it may qualify to receive an historic marker listing its date and original owner. The information gathered in this process aids in neighborhood preservation efforts.

Our volunteer title researchers study land, tax and water records, historic maps, and city directories to establish your building's first

The researchers welcome any oral history or copies of old documents relating to your building you may have. Please allow at least 16—20 weeks for completion of the research and delivery of the durable, hand-lettered

PLAQUE ADDRESS _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

DAY PHONE _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

LEGAL OWNER (IF DIFFERENT) _____

APPROXIMATE DATE PURCHASED BY CURRENT OWNER _____ APPROXIMATE AGE OF PROPERTY _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

MEMBERSHIP STATUS: YES NO

PRICE OF PLAQUE: \$250.00 Non-member \$235.00 Members Re-Painting a Plaque \$100.00

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required with this application. Balance is due upon completion.

HISTORIC PLAQUES COMPLETED

**85 Thames Street
George Elion**

**11 West Street
Hezekiah S. Bartlett
1891**

**4 Maxson Place
Silas Maxson Jr.
1926**

**16 / 18 Granite Street
Elizabeth Lindsley
1846**

**99 Oneco Avenue
Thomas H. MacWhinney
1921**

**938 Ocean Avenue
Samuel T. Hubbard
1901
2010 Restoration Award**

**14 Guthrie Place
Henry W. Kaiser
1926**



49 Washington Street
Post Office Box 1134
New London, CT 06320

**SAT., SUN., SEPTEMBER 17 & 18:
CELEBRATE RIVERSIDE**

PARK WEEKEND!

Events include:

Saturday Walking Tours:

\$15, for one or both neighborhood tours

1:00 Begin at Winthrop School on Grove Street

2:00 Nature Walk in Riverside Park with Glenn Dreyer—free

3:00 Begin at Adelaide Street entrance to the Park



Saturday & Sunday in the Park - 11:30—3:30

Children's games — Artists and Photographers, *En Plein Air* — lots of music—Refreshments for purchase

Music currently booked for the weekend, schedule to come.

Ron Gletcherow & Steve Fagan, Shawn Taylor

Hugh Birdsall, The People, Michael Harris,

Ohio-Freer Collective, Gabriel Kastle, Anna Thompson.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13 6:30—8:30 p.m. - Free

THE FUTURE OF RIVERSIDE PARK

Pilot House, Ocean Beach.

The Forum will be moderated by Norman Garrick, Director of UConn's Center for Transportation and Urban Planning. Additional speakers will provide information on plans for how Riverside

Park can be used in the future; the importance of the park to the new Winthrop Science Magnet School; and other issues that need to be considered when citizens decide how to vote.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16: CEDAR GROVE CEMETERY TOUR led by Bill Peterson, Curator Emeritus of Mystic Seaport

2:00—\$25 members, \$30 non-members

Cedar Grove is one of Bill's favorite sites in southern New England, he will talk about architectural styles as represented by some of the monuments and a bit of maritime history as well as Civil War history since we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. The fine monuments to New London's most prominent citizens hold stories of valor, tragedy, and proud family histories covering several generations.

Thursday, OCTOBER 27: CANDIDATES FORUM

6:30—8:30 - New London Public Library, 63 Huntington St.

Learn how the candidates stand on issues of Preservation of Historic Resources; Riverside Park; Urban development issues relating to the HyettPalma and Cecil Group studies; Re-connect New London recommendations and more.

Let's know what we're voting for on November 8!

TBA: Sometime in November: GET PLASTERED! A great party to learn about plans for the renovations of 153 and 147 Bank Street.