

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Donna Dufresne [windsong@snet.net](mailto:windsong@snet.net)/ 860-465-7228

### Pomfret Historical Society to Hold Workshops with Support from CT Humanities Grant

August 10, 2021; Pomfret, CT...On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Pomfret Historical Society was awarded a grant from Connecticut Humanities. This funding will enable the organization to offer four historical workshops this October in Pomfret. Entitled, *Waking the Dead: Archaeology, Genealogical and Archival Research About Enslaved Africans in Windham County*, these workshops are open to the public and will help facilitate restoration of the Randall Higginbotham Burial Ground on the Wyndham Land Trust's Nightingale Woods property in Pomfret.

Workshop presenters include historian and writer, Donna Dufresne; Dr. Nick Bellantoni, State Archaeologist Emeritus; Dr. Sarah Sportman, State Archaeologist; Ruth Shapleigh Brown, CT Gravestone Network; Michael Carroll, Rediscovering History Gravestone Restoration; and William Fothergill, expert in African and Native American genealogy.

Two workshops will be centered around current research on the enslaved Africans buried at the Randall Higginbotham Burial Ground. On October 2nd, in collaboration with The Last Green Valley's *Walktober* (a month-long series of regional walks and other activities), Donna Dufresne will present *The Lost Village of Voices, A New Narrative*. The presentation will begin at the Pomfret Community Center at 10 A.M., followed by a tour of the Higginbotham Homestead at Nightingale Woods. Rain date is October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1 P.M. Registration is \$10.



The second workshop on local enslaved Africans, *Waking the Dead, The Story Told by Artifacts and Primary Sources*, will be held on October 23rd. This day-long symposium will include presentations by keynote speakers Dr. Nick Bellantoni, Dr. Sarah Sportman, Ruth Shapleigh Brown and Michael Carroll. The morning program will begin at the Rectory School at 9 A.M. followed by a demonstration on gravestone cleaning, restoration and repairs at the Randall/Higginbotham Burial Ground and a tour of the historic remains of the Higginbotham farm and mills. Registration is \$20, including lunch.

The third workshop, *Waking the Dead, Uncovering the Past in Ancient Burial Grounds*, will take place at the Sabin/South Cemetery in Pomfret on October 30th at 1 P.M. A presentation by Ruth Shapleigh Brown at the Pomfret Community Center will

be followed by a tour of the Sabin/South Cemetery and workshop on gravestone carvers, lichen removal and safe cleaning of gravestones and the care of ancient burial grounds. Registration is \$10.

The fourth workshop, *Waking the Dead, Native American and African Descent Genealogy and Archival Research* will take place at the Pomfret Community Center on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 1 P.M. with genealogist William Fothergill. Mr. Fothergill will share techniques he learned while researching Ebenezer Bassett, from Litchfield, CT. who was of Native and African American descent and the first person of color appointed as ambassador to Haiti in 1869. Registration is \$10.

Further details and online registration can be found on the Pomfret Historical Society website <https://pomfret-historical-society.org> starting August 15th. Register for individual workshops or all four for a discounted fee of \$35.

*(Photos by Donna Dufresne)*

# # #



Pomfret Historical Society's purpose is to acquire, preserve, and promote the history of the Town of Pomfret, Connecticut. New members are welcome and participation is rewarded in the satisfaction of educating the residents of Connecticut and other more global communities about Pomfrets unique history. Learn more at [pomfret-historical-society.org](https://pomfret-historical-society.org) or on Facebook at @PomfretCTHistory.

Connecticut Humanities (CTH) is an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. CTH connects people to the humanities through grants, partnerships, and collaborative programs. CTH projects, administration, and program development are supported by state and federal matching funds, community foundations and gifts from private sources. Learn more by visiting [cthumanities.org](https://cthumanities.org).

**cthumanities**

