

Derby Historical Society Issue

DHS Receives Grants for Humphreys House Restoration from Persbacker and Valley Community Foundations

Last year, the Derby Historical Society received a \$20,000 grant from the New Milford based Persbacker Family Foundation toward the restoration project at the General David Humphreys House & Museum at 37 Elm Street in Ansonia.

This generous grant was a great impetus for the campaign for the extensive work required.

As a further incentive to get donors and the public involved, the Persbacker Family Foundation has also given the DHS an opportunity to receive an additional \$30,000 in matching funds.

The organization has received \$4,494.00 towards our matching funds to date, and it hopes to meet the matching funding at the earliest.

Toward that end, DHS is in discussions for a major fundraising event in April. This and every event will help to benefit the restoration.

The Derby Historical Society has also been awarded a multi-year Capacity Building Grant from the Valley Community Foundation, to assist with the costs associated with the Restoration Project. The grant, totaling \$50,000, will be paid over the next three years.

Contact DHS Executive Director Paula Norton with any suggestions for this and other fundraising events at: (203) 735-1908 or Paula@derbyhistorical.org



Who was David Humphreys of Derby?

Many people do not know the accomplishments past members of their hometowns. Yet for Derby and its environs, we know of such an individual, and that is David Humphreys.

He was born in Derby, the son of the Rev. Daniel Humphreys and Sarah Riggs Bowers Humphreys, the owners of the present day house and museum. He received his Masters degree in 1774 from Yale and was a teacher until 1776.

He enlisted in the 2nd Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Army in July of 1776.

Humphrey was part of the successful battle at Sag Harbor, NY, and due to this, Humphreys was promoted to the rank of Major. After being an advisor to two American generals, he was appointed aide-de-camp of General George Washington in 1780.

There are even more impressive factoids about Humphreys life aside from the Continental Army:

- He was a member of the State’s General Assembly.
- He was named U.S. Minister to Portugal, and later, Spain.
- He introduced the Merino breed of sheep and its fine quality wool the state and country.
- He built the first successful wool mill factory in the U.S.
- He owned a factory in Seymour that produced iron tools

In short, Humphreys was an important person in the development of the Lower Naugatuck Valley as well as the Nation.



David Humphreys House Restoration Continues

The Derby Historical Society continues the restoration of the exterior General David Humphreys House & Museum in Ansonia.

The extensive project is set to be completed in 2018. Estimated at \$200,000 the project involves the removal of the existing siding for the repair of deteriorated sills and framing and to address moisture infiltration issues.

The current exterior consists of a mixture of older pine and modern cedar. The trim is a mixture of older oak casings and corner boards repaired with pine.

As always, the restoration will be sensitive to the original architectural details of the 1692 house while allowing for modern construction and materials practices.

The repairs will incorporate the use of modern materials to better insulate the walls of the house. Measures will also be taken to protect and control the house against moisture issues.



Alcam

Writing & Admin., LLC

Contact Ralph or Patti for:

• Writing, Editing and Design Services

• Public Relations, Digital Content, SEO

203-305-9255*203-893-8623

e-mail: thevalley.voice@gmail.com

The E-Street Gallery

Visit us to shop and view our local artists

The Valley Arts Council
35 Elizabeth Street • Derby
203.516.0822



Lady Humphreys Parlour was luxury living in 1762

Inside the 1762 David Humphreys House

By not just looking at these pictures, but also visiting the Humphreys House, what can today's visitor, spoiled by modernity, learn about life's challenges in 1762? Visit the house and imagine the following:

- The heat is not piped in, so gathering wood for heat and cooking was necessary every day, all year;
- You'd have to bear the cold of Winter by broiling by the central fireplaces while freezing a mere few feet away from the fire;
- Cooking over an open heat hoisting very heavy iron cookware with a very real chance clothing could catch on fire;
- What passes for a luxury home in its day is very sparse in comfort, with straw as padding from mattresses and chairs.



Heavy cast iron cookery



A drop-leaf 'work station'



Typical construction

Free Valley-Voice CT Subscription Offer!

We hope you enjoyed our inaugural issue. Would you like to receive a newsletter every other week?

We have a deal for you...Subscribe and receive *at no cost* a.pdf version sent to you by e-mail. All we need is an address. That's it! We want you to see the *More of the Best of the Rest of the Valley...* now!

Send your request to: thevalley.voicect@gmail.com



Children's Educational Programs and Resources

A Day in 1762

The Day in 1762 Program began when the David Humphreys House first opened to the public in 1980. The DHS describes this program as "an engaging, living history field trip that will explore what life was like during the 18th century." That year was chosen because David Humphreys was the same age as a contemporary fifth-grader back then, and his boyhood home is an ideal place for such learning.

Costumed interpreters lead students in a tour of the Humphreys House, a walking tour of the Ansonia Historic District and participating in some of the daily activities such as spinning wool and open hearth cooking.

A Day in 1759

This program was created primarily for third-graders as part of the DHS In-School Outreach Program. Costumed interpreters will visit the class to help learning about 18th-Century clothing, education, food, and even play.

Teacher Resources

Teachers are encouraged to inquire about pre-trip curriculum and post trip learning activities. Additionally, the DHS research library has subject files for and historic photographs that may be suitable for use in the classroom.

To learn more about all educational programs, or reserve a date for any program, contact Paula Norton at

(203) 735-1908 or paula@derbyhistorical.org

