



Orientation & History Session – September 12

Goals & Objectives

Goal: To provide an introduction to the program and gain a better understanding of the history of western Connecticut.

Objectives:

- ❖ To get to know fellow 2016 WCL Classmates.
- ❖ To provide a historical background and context for Connecticut, Litchfield County, the Town of Litchfield, and the Native American history of Western Connecticut.
- ❖ To gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of preservation.
- ❖ To learn of opportunities to engage in organizations that work on preservation, history, and local issues.

Important Session Information

Session Leaders

Catherine Fields, Executive Director, *Litchfield Historical Society*,
Ted White, *WCL '15*, Rich Pomerantz, *WCL '14*

Advisor

John Long, Program Officer, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

Suggested Attire

Dressing for comfort is appropriate. **Comfortable shoes are recommended for a 60 minute low-impact walk.** If rain is forecasted please bring an umbrella or rain jacket.

(Participants who do not feel comfortable with the walking tour may return to the Historical Society.)

Venues

Litchfield Historical Society

7 South Street, Litchfield, CT 06759 (p. 860.567.4501)

The Village (Lunch)

25 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759

Parking

Free parking is available across the street at:

Congregational Church of Litchfield

21 Torrington Road (Rt. 202), Litchfield, CT 06759

Since there is a pre-school operating on this property and the children use portions of the parking lot, please park in the middle of the lot. [Click here for a map.](#)



Agenda

- 8:15- 8:45 Arrival & Light Breakfast
- 8:45- 9:00 **Welcome**
Lori Ann Brass, Co-Chair, *2016 WCL Planning Team* and *WCL '15*
Kathy Kehoe, Co-Chair, *2016 WCL Planning Team* and *WCL '14*
Martha Bernstein, Board Chair, *Connecticut Community Foundation* and *WCL '14*
- 9:00- 10:00 **Program Orientation**
Paula Van Ness, CEO, *Connecticut Community Foundation*
- 10:00- 10:15 **Break**
- 10:15- 11:00 **A Perspective on Connecticut History**
Walt Woodward, *Connecticut State Historian*
- 11:00- 11:45 **The Hidden History of Litchfield County**
Peter Vermilyea, *Teacher and Author*
- 11:45- 12:00 **Break**
- 12:00 - 12:45 **Tour of Historical Society Museum**
Catherine Fields, Executive Director, *Litchfield Historical Society*
- 1:00- 2:00 Lunch at The Village Restaurant
- 2:00- 3:00 **Walking tour of Historic Litchfield and Tapping Reeve Law School**
Catherine Fields, Executive Director, *Litchfield Historical Society*
- 3:00 - 3:30 **A Short History of Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley**
Raechel Guest, Director, *Silas Bronson Library*
- 3:45- 4:30 **Native American History is American History**
Dr. Lucianne Lavin, Institute for American Indian Studies
- 4:30- 4:45 **Session Day Wrap Up**
Brief Review of the Day & Preview of Environment Day



Speaker Biographies

Paula Van Ness

President & Chief Executive Officer, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

Paula Van Ness was named President and CEO of Connecticut Community Foundation in February 2012 and brings four decades of leadership experience to the organization. Previously, Paula served as Chief Operating Officer of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation in New York City. She has held additional positions at Starlight Children's Foundation, Make-A-Wish Foundation of America and National Alliance to End Homelessness. Paula was the founding president of the National AIDS Fund (now AIDS United).

Paula has served on the governing boards and as an officer of Independent Sector and KaBOOM! Currently she serves on the board of Gift of Adoption. Paula completed her BS in Child Development at the University of Arizona and earned an MS in Organization Development from the University of San Francisco. She is a certified Grant Professional and a graduate of a leadership development program at the Center for Creative Leadership.

Contact Info: pvanness@conncf.org, <http://www.conncf.org/>

Catherine Keene Fields

Executive Director, *Litchfield Historical Society*

Ms. Keene Fields has been director of the Litchfield Historical Society since 1987. Before coming to Litchfield she was Director of the Passaic County Historical Society in Paterson, New Jersey for seven years. She holds a BA in American History from the College of William and Mary in Virginia, a MA in Cultural History/Museum Administration from the University of Vermont, and attended the Seminar for Historical Administration in Williamsburg. While in Paterson, she collaborated with other local organizations to develop joint exhibitions and programs including the award winning *Life and Times in Silk City*. During her tenure in Litchfield, Cathy directed the renovation and re-interpretation of the Litchfield History Museum and the Tapping Reeve House and Litchfield Law School and she guided the society through accreditation by the American Association of Museums. She is a former member of the National Council of the American Association for State and Local History and has served on the boards of the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Connecticut League of History Organizations.

Contact Info: cfields@litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org, <http://www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org/>

Walt Woodward, Ph.D.

Connecticut State Historian

Mr. Woodward is the fifth person to hold the position of State Historian, which was created in the 1930s in preparation for Connecticut's 300th anniversary. The State Historian is appointed by the trustees of the University of Connecticut, and is a faculty member in the UConn Department of History. He is also assigned by the legislature to serve on a number of boards and commissions that promote, preserve, and/or research state history. In addition, the Office of the State Historian provides information on historical matters to the



WESTERN CONNECTICUT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

media, public, and legislature, and maintains active programs of historical research & public outreach, conducting lectures, programs, and teacher education seminars throughout the state.

Prof. Woodward received his Ph. D. with Distinction from the University of Connecticut in 2001, and has served as State Historian since 2004. He obtained his Master's Degree in History from Cleveland State University, and his B.A. in English from the University of Florida. Prior to joining UConn, he was a faculty member of the Department of History at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA.

Contact Info: walt@uconn.edu, <http://history.uconn.edu/faculty-by-name/walter-woodward/>

Peter Vermilyea

Teacher and Author

Peter Vermilyea teaches history at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village, CT and at Western Connecticut State University. A graduate of Gettysburg College, he is the scholarship director at his alma mater's Civil War Institute. He is the author or editor of five books, most recently *Hidden History of Litchfield County* (2014) and *Wicked Litchfield County* (2016).

Contact Info: pvermily@yahoo.com, <https://hiddeninplainsightblog.com/>

Raechel Guest

Director, Silas Bronson Library

Raechel Guest is a graduate of the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. She was the Assistant Curator at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury for 8 years, researching various aspects of local history for special exhibits, and Executive Director/Curator of the Cornwall Historical Society for five years. She became Director of the Silas Bronson Library in Waterbury in 2015. A Waterbury resident, in her free time Ms. Guest writes about the city's history for occasional publication and for her blog, [Waterbury Thoughts](#).

Contact Info: rguest@waterburycct.org, <http://www.bronsonlibrary.org/>

Dr. Lucianne Lavin

Director of Research and Collections, Institute for American Indian Studies

Lucianne Lavin is an anthropologist and archaeologist with over 40 years of research and field experience in the Northeast, including teaching, museum exhibits and curatorial work, cultural resource management, editorial work, and public relations. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology from New York University and her B.A. from Indiana University. Dr. Lavin is a founding member of the state's Native American Heritage Advisory Council and editor of the journal of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut. She has taught archaeology and anthropology courses at a number of colleges, including Connecticut College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, and Adelphi University. During her term as a Research Associate at the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University, she co-directed their present



WESTERN CONNECTICUT
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Connecticut Prehistory exhibit and wrote the accompanying teacher's manual. She has owned and operated an archaeological firm for over 25 years.

Dr. Lavin has served as the Director of Research and Collections at the Institute for American Indian Studies since 2004. She has written over 150 professional publications and technical reports on the archaeology and ethnohistory of the Northeast, including her recent award-winning book, *Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples: What Archaeology, History and Oral Traditions Teach Us about their Communities and Cultures*. She was awarded the Russell award by the Archaeological Society of Connecticut and elected Fellow of the New York State Archaeological Association for exemplary archaeology work in their respective states.

Contact Info: llavin@iaismuseum.org, <http://iaismuseum.org/>