

**THE FARMINGTON VALLEY CT HERITAGE NETWORK
PRESS RELEASE**

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Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction?

**Delve into the Rich Tapestry of Farmington's Past
on a bus tour with the Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network
Saturday, April 27, 2024, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. Rain or Shine.**

AVON, CT: The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network (<https://www.farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org/>) is pleased to present part three of its three-part bus tour series introduced in 2022, *"Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction?"* The tour, taking place on **Saturday, April 27, 2024**, visits three historic sites in **Farmington – Riverside Cemetery, Stanley-Whitman House, and Hill-Stead Museum** – with fascinating tales told at each site and in transit on the comfortable bus. Between talks, participants will enjoy a furnished box lunch (choices available) at Stanley-Whitman House. Admission is \$50 per person and includes the bus tour, lunch, and a **pre-tour lecture** (*see below*) on **Thursday, April 25th** at 7:00 pm. **Seats are limited – reservations are required for the bus.** Email nancy@farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org, or call 860.680.5298 by **April 12th** to reserve your spot, choose a payment option, and submit your lunch choice.

To set the stage for our tour of intrigue, a **pre-tour talk, "Bad Boys and Wicked Women of Farmington,"** will be presented by former Town of Farmington Historian **Betty Coykendall** on **Thursday, April 25th at 7:00 pm** at the **Stanley-Whitman House**, 37 High Street, Farmington (<https://s-wh.org/>). Betty will captivate attendees with an unforgettable journey through time, filled with intrigue, mystery, and thought-provoking discussions. The lecture is open to the public; admission is \$5 per person for those not joining the April 27 bus tour, payable at the door.

After being entertained and educated about individuals who left an indelible mark on Farmington's town lore, participants will be primed to dive deeper into the stories of the area and see where (and if) they happened. Tourgoers will meet to board the bus on **Saturday, April 27 at 9:15 AM** at the **Noah Webster School / Barney Library Parking Lot**, 2 School Street, Farmington. The bus will depart promptly at **9:30 AM** for its first stop, Riverside Cemetery.

At **Riverside Cemetery**, **Joanne Lawson** of the Farmington Historical Society will talk about when the cemetery was founded and the first burials to take place there. She'll introduce participants to Foone, one of the Amistad Africans who stayed in Farmington after the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the Africans' freedom, and who drowned in Farmington in 1841. Other notable people buried in Riverside Cemetery also left their mark on the town; we'll hear about Miss Sarah Porter, Sarah Brandegees Barney, Theodate Pope Riddle, and abolitionist AF Williams, among others.

From Riverside Cemetery, the bus will head to **Stanley-Whitman House**, where author, local historian, and museum researcher **Kate Linsley Rodgers** will present "Here and There with The Smiths," a talk that will

delve into the history of Thomas and Mary Smith, early residents of the Stanley-Whitman House, and their twelve children, whose lives paint a vivid picture of 18th-century American family dynamics. More than just a historical narrative, Kate's presentation explores the challenges and opportunities faced by early American families and offers insights into their everyday lives. With this richer understanding of Stanley-Whitman House's historical significance, participants will settle in at the Whitman Tavern for a relaxing and congenial lunch, no doubt peppered with interesting conversation.

After lunch, the bus will make its final stop at **Hill-Stead Museum**, where participants will hear about Theodate Pope Riddle's ardent spiritualism. In addition to being a pioneering architect and agriculturalist, Theodate was a devoted spiritualist who attended seances and sought to communicate with lost friends and family. The subject of psychical research intrigued Theodate so much that she spent countless hours and considerable sums of her wealth supporting the movement. Participants will learn about the spiritualist movement and about how Theodate's survival of the sinking of the Lusitania influenced her beliefs.

At 2:45 pm, after a day filled with fascinating stories, tourgoers will be returned to their cars at the Noah Wallace School / Barney Library parking lot, ready to share the day's tidbits with friends and family.

Proceeds from the tour benefit **The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network**, whose mission is to enhance appreciation of the rich history of Connecticut's Farmington Valley by promoting collaboration and communication among heritage groups and raising cultural awareness through programming and tours. Learn more at <https://www.farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org/>.

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Photo caption: Among the highlights of the upcoming "Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction" bus tour presented by The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network are