



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Way Back When: A Witness to History

**Relive the Farmington Valley's Storied Past
on a Bus Tour with the Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network
Saturday, April 26, 2025, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Rain or Shine.**

AVON, CT (March 24, 2025): The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network (<https://www.farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org/>) is delighted to present a **new** four-part bus tour series kicking off this April, “*Way Back When: A Witness to History.*” With each part covering three towns in the Farmington Valley, the series offers an intimate glimpse, through first-hand accounts, of life in days gone by in the Farmington Valley. Part one of the tour, taking place on **Saturday, April 26, 2025**, visits sites in Barkhamsted, New Hartford, and Collinsville, each providing a fascinating peek, through interviews and diaries, into the lives of its residents in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Commentary on historic spots along the route will be offered in transit on the comfortable tour bus. A furnished box lunch (choices available) will be served in Barkhamsted between stops. Admission is \$50 per person and includes the bus tour, a “goody bag” for the bus, lunch, and a **pre-tour lecture** (*see below*) on **Thursday, April 24th** at 7:00 pm. **Reservations are required for the bus.** Email mzlotnick@cox.net or call 860.841.8344 by **April 10th** to reserve your spot, choose a payment option, and submit your lunch choice (tuna, turkey, or veggie wrap).

Mike Day, author on 19th-century education and Curator of The Barkhamsted Historical Society’s One-Room Schoolhouse, will whet history buffs’ appetites with a pre-tour talk, “**The Life of a Typical Farmer in the 1880s,**” presented at the **Canton Public Library/Community Center** on **Thursday, April 24th at 7:00 pm** (40 Dyer Ave., Canton, <https://cantonpubliclibrary.org/>). Drawing from the highly descriptive diaries kept by farmer George Weed, Mike will explore the life, work and relationships of a typical local farmer of that period. The lecture is open to the public; admission is \$5 per person for those not joining the April 26 bus tour, payable at the door.

Primed for a trip “Way Back When,” tourgoers will meet to board the bus on **Saturday, April 26 at 9:15 AM** at **Collinsville Canoe & Kayak**, 41 Bridge Street, Collinsville (<https://www.collinsvillecanoe.com/>). The bus will depart promptly at **9:30 AM** for its first stop in Barkhamsted.

At the **Barkhamsted** Senior Center, **Paul Hart**, Vice President of the Barkhamsted Historical Society, will introduce attendees to Albert Slade in his presentation, *Albert Slade Goes to the Store*. It is July 23, 1874, and Albert Slade hitches up his wagon and makes a trip down to the Barkhamsted Hollow store. Paul invites everyone to go along for the ride and see what the town – and life in it – was like over 150 years ago.

After experiencing the Barkhamsted of 1874, attendees continue their journey to **New Hartford**. At the New Hartford Town Hall and on a short walking tour of the town center, **Anne Hall**, Town Historian and board member of the New Hartford Historical Society, talks about *Building a New Town: Mr. Ingle, Carpenter, and the Center of New Hartford in the 1870s and 1880s*. Anne will show attendees what life was like for John Ingle, who moved to New Hartford in the late 1870s, and how the buildings were changing in the town center at the time.

A relaxing lunch at the Barkhamsted Community Room will offer tourgoers a chance to mingle and discuss what they've learned so far, including the historical tidbits revealed *en route* by the trip's on-bus tour guide, **Mike Day**.

After lunch, the bus will make its final stop at the **Canton Historical Society**, where participants will hear about *Main and River Streets, Collinsville 1910-1920*. The Collins (Axe) Company (1826-1966) employed thousands of people over the years, who came from far and wide to this section of Canton, CT, now known as Collinsville. With so many people living and working within walking distance of downtown Collinsville, merchants and businesses sprang up to supply the needs of growing families. **Kathy Taylor**, President of The Canton Historical Society, Inc., and the Town of Canton Historian, will show vintage photos of Main and River Streets and share stories garnered from interviews with two women, Mildred Bond Case and her friend, Mrs. Ben (Rae) Smith. Attendees will see the many types of services and business that existed in this 1910-1920 period, and how little has changed over the years.

After witnessing history in these three towns, tourgoers will be returned to their cars at Collinsville Canoe & Kayak by 3:30 pm. All can look forward to Parts 2, 3, and 4 of this Bus Tour series, occurring, respectively, in April 2026, 2027, and 2028!

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 "Way Back When: A Witness to History" bus tour presented by The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network on April 26, 9:30 – 3:30 pm, are stories of individuals and their daily lives in Barkhamsted, New Hartford, and Canton, CT, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, taken from primary sources. Pictured here is a postcard of Main Street, Collinsville, CT in the early 1900s (courtesy of the Canton Historical Society).