

April 2012: An Update on Our Interviews...

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Bennett Jewelers: A Family Business, interviewer, Sallie Mc Hale

In this interview, the narrator, Wyatt Bennett traces the origins of Bennett Jewelers, which came into existence in 1945 when it was founded by his grandfather and father. Bennett, who remembers fixing clocks at the store as a young boy, took over the business with his wife Aura in 1981 when his father retired. Bennett began his own semi-retirement in 2006 and can still be found in the store repairing clocks while his daughters Alyson and Laura keep things running smoothly. In the interview he tells of traveling to New York's famed 47th street to buy diamonds, riding the train home with a pocket full of gems, often "dressed down" to throw would-be muggers off the trail. Expert jewelers all, the Bennetts' specialty has long been the repair of watches and, mainly, antique clocks. Bennett has over the years often traveled to owners' homes to work on clocks too delicate to be moved. One finishes reading the interview wondering what will become of these fragile treasures once Wyatt Bennett fully retires.

Temple Sholom and Volunteer Activity, interviewer, Nina L. Renna

Norma Golden Perlstein narrates this interview, a compelling account of her many years in Greenwich as executive director of Temple Sholom and as an active volunteer in various local organizations. During her tenure at Temple Sholom, Perlstein says with humor, her duties included everything but giving sermons on Friday night and Saturday mornings. As a result of her extensive outreach efforts at the temple, she became involved with many local organizations, the details of which are described in her interview in vivid detail. Of all the experiences Perlstein relates perhaps the most compelling is the account of her service in a program to provide friendship to a resident of Pathways, a halfway house for people with mental illness. The friendship begun there twenty-two years ago continues to the present day. Perlstein's interview is an inspirational account of someone who has "given back" in numerous ways, both as a professional and as a volunteer.

Growing Up on Brae Burn Farm, Interviewer, Nina L. Renna

Margaret Watt begins this interview describing her first experiences on the Farm through the prism of a fairytale. After losing the family nursery business in Stamford in 1939, her father became the estate manager of Brae Burn Farm, owned by James McCue, who made his fortune as a supplier of copper to the military and to industry. Ms. Watt, four at the time, describes the owner's home as a mansion with a six- to eight-car garage, a pool and pool house, tennis courts, and stables. Running the estate required the services of a "whole army," and it was the job of the narrator's father to oversee the

grounds with its many gardens and greenhouses. Ms. Watt lovingly describes poignant and colorful episodes of growing up on a Greenwich estate in a bygone era. It is in many ways a fairytale, serving as a reminder of the distinction between the classes, a distinction that was at once amiable and at the same time not to be breached.

Greenwich Library During the Storm of March, 2010, Interviewer, Harriet Feldman

When is a library more than a library? When it sees to the needs of a community after a massive storm. That is the conclusion made abundantly clear in this informative interview narrated by Carl J. White, the Local History and Genealogy Librarian of the Greenwich Library. White describes the library's role during the storm of March, 2010. After high winds and a torrential downpour, 125 utility poles in town snapped with a resulting power outage to about 18,000 Greenwich residents. When many of those without power began streaming into the library on Sunday following the storm, volunteers were called in to help manage the load. White gives credit to Carol Mahoney, the Library Director, who played a vital, hands-on role implementing many of the ideas that made for a smooth-running disaster relief program at the library.