

Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction?

**Hear more legends of the Farmington Valley and visit their locations on a special bus tour with the Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network
Saturday, April 29, 2023, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Rain or Shine.**

AVON, CT: The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network (<https://www.farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org/>) is pleased to present part two of its three-part bus tour series introduced in 2022, “*Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction?*” The tour, taking place on **Saturday, April 29, 2023**, visits multiple historic sites in **Canton, Avon, and Unionville**, with expert commentary at each site and along the way on the comfortable bus. Between tour stops, participants will enjoy a furnished box lunch (choices available) at the Avon Senior Center. Admission is \$50 per person and includes the bus tour, lunch, and a **pre-tour lecture** (*see below*) on **Thursday, April 27th** at 7:00 pm. **Seats are limited – reservations are required for the bus.** Email nancy@farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org, or call 860.680.5298 by **April 15th** to reserve your spot, hear payment options, and submit your lunch choice.

To set the stage for our tour of intrigue, a **pre-tour talk**, “*The Avaricious Humour of Designing Englishmen: Land Transactions Between the Tunxis and European Settlers of the Farmington Valley*,” will be presented by archaeologist **Ken Feder** on **Thursday, April 27th at 7:00 pm** at the **Stanley-Whitman House**, 37 High Street, Farmington (<https://s-wh.org/>). Dr. Feder will discuss the story of the unsuccessful attempt by the Tunxis to use the English legal system to retain their ownership of the lands that comprise the Farmington Valley. The lecture is open to the public; admission is \$5 per person for those not joining the April 29 bus tour.

After hearing some of the history of Indigenous peoples, colonization, and land struggles, participants will be primed to hear other historic tales of the Farmington Valley and see where (and if) they happened. Tourgoers will meet to board the bus on **Saturday, April 29** at **9:15 AM** at the **Avon Senior Center**, 635 West Avon Road, Avon. The bus will depart promptly at **9:30 AM** for its first stop, Canton Historical Museum.

At the **Canton Historical Museum**, Kathy Taylor, Property Manager of the former Collins Company buildings, will discuss the history of the Collins Company 1826-1966, John Brown’s famous “pike,” and his impact on the Civil War. From Tom Ayres, President and Librarian of the Canton Historical Society, tourgoers will learn about the Museum library and the Farmington Valley Railroad Society Model Trains. Spines will tingle when Dory Dzinski has the floor; the author of *Haunted Collinsville (...and Creeping through All of Canton)*, the first book in the Haunted Valley series, she will discuss all things strange and odd in Canton history.

From Canton, the bus will head to the **West Avon Cemetery**, where Richard (Dick) Rulon, Superintendent of the Cemetery, will present “Beneath These Stones: Old Time Residents of Avon.” Participants will see the graves and hear the stories of prominent residents including Charles Stilwell, brother-in-law of Thomas Edison, who lost his sight as the result of an electrical experiment; Edith Magna, a fly girl for the US Army air corps; and Diana Woodford, murdered by her husband. Boarding the bus once more, participants will head to the Avon Senior Center for a relaxing lunch.

After lunch, the bus will make its final tour stop at the **Unionville Museum**, where Olivia Germano will present folklore stories of how Agent Albert Burnham, station master of the Unionville train depot, which still stands today, foiled a robbery. Germano, an immigrant from Poland, a forty-plus year resident of Unionville, and an active volunteer of the Unionville Museum and the community, will relay many other stories, including tales of a disappearing woman who fell into dangerous waters; a sighting of a mother and son in Suburban Park dressed in clothes of a bygone era; how Abraham Lincoln figures in Unionville’s clock history, a headless body found in an oak tree, and more.

At 3:15 pm, after a day filled with fascinating sights and stories, tourgoers will be returned to their cars back at the Avon Senior Center.

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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Among the highlights of the upcoming “Lively Lore & Legends: Fact or Fiction” bus tour presented by The Farmington Valley CT Heritage Network are John Brown’s famous “pike” at the Canton Historical Museum, and the grave of Charles Stilwell, brother-in-law of Thomas Edison, who lost his eyesight in an electrical experiment when he was the manager of the Edison Company in Ontario.