

## **Brief History of the Washington Historical Society**

In 1964, the Washington Reporter called for the founding of a Washington Historical Society. The article stated, "The benefits for local students would be invaluable as they studied history. Not as dates in books, but as people whom they know and places which they pass every day." In the mid-1970s, several Washington citizens came together to try and save the Zimmerman Dairy round barn on Eldridge Street. Ultimately, the citizens couldn't keep the barn standing, but they came together to form the Washington Historical Society. As an informal group, they met at schools, churches, and the Herbst building on North Main Street. At the end of the decade, Caroline Martini, daughter of Dr. Harley Zinser allowed the Society to use the old doctor's office building at Main and Zinser. The Historical Society held its first official meeting on October 7, 1980, in the Washington Community High School commons. President, Miss Whit (Frances Whitaker) conducted the meeting. The Society then established its headquarters in the old Dr. office.

In 1995, the Dement-Zinser House and the Dr. Office were both purchased from the Caroline Zinser Martini estate. After an extensive renovation process, the buildings were restored to how they would have appeared in the 1920's and were opened to the public in 2002. For 18 years, the Dement-Zinser House served as headquarters, museum, and archival storage for the Society. But as time went on, it became apparent that the buildings no longer met the needs of the Society. In November 2020, the Society purchased the historic Danforth Building at 128 Washington Square and after some interior renovation, will use it for our office, archiving, and displays. The Society is excited to move onto the historic Washington Square where we will be better positioned to continue serving the community.