



Lynne Olson, author of "Citizens of London," speaks yesterday morning at the State House in Concord. In photo above, she addresses Rivington Winant, right, as Gov. John Lynch looks on during a reception for her book, which features John Gilbert Winant, former governor of New Hampshire.

JOSH GIBNEY/UNION LEADER

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Former NH governor lauded for WWII U.S.-Britain ties

◆ **John Gilbert Winant:** New book, "Citizens of London," highlights central role the then-ambassador to Great Britain played in fight for freedom.

By **GARRY RAYNO**
New Hampshire Union Leader

CONCORD — The portrait of former New Hampshire Gov. John Gilbert Winant hangs on the second floor of the State House as do the portraits of all former governors, although most — like Winant's — are hardly noticed.

That could change, however, as a new book detailing the behind-the-scenes events forging the alliance between the United States and Great Britain during World War II, prominently features Winant

and his role. At the time, Winant served as United States ambassador to Great Britain, having replaced Joseph Kennedy and his appeasement approach to Hitler.

Yesterday, the author of the book, "Citizens of London," Lynne Olson, spoke to about 75 New Hampshire notables, including politicians past and present, history lovers, Winant's and his associates' surviving family members and several folks who met the man when he was alive.

Olson acknowledged she did not know who Winant was

until several years ago, but now understands the pivotal role he played in "creating the war-time alliance between Great Britain and America and nurturing it to keep it alive. It was a special relationship that won the war, preserved democracy and saved the world."

Introduced by Gov. John Lynch, Olson thanked many in attendance — particularly Secretary of State Bill Gardner and historian Dean Dexter — for helping with her research on Winant, the least known but most talked about figure as she promotes her book, she noted.

"Citizens of London" features Americans in London who helped forge the alliance: Winant, a progressive Republican who served three

terms as New Hampshire's governor; Edward R. Murrow, head of CBS News in Europe; and Averill Harriman, an industrialist who ran President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Lend-Lease program.

Among those attending yesterday's event in Executive Council Chambers at the State House were former Governors Stephen Merrill and Walter Peterson, as well as Bill Shaheen, husband of former Gov. Jeanne Shaheen, and Peter Thomson, son of former Gov. Mel Thomson.

Olson spoke at the New Hampshire Historical Society last evening and speaks today at Saint Paul's School in Concord. Winant first came to New Hampshire to attend the school, and later taught there.