

Stratford Historical Society
News Letter
March, 1960

Many things of interest to all Society members have happened this past winter at Judson House and the Historical Museum. Countless hours have been spent by members in the House and the Museum getting it ready for a very busy summer season. More and more adults and children are visiting our historic shrine. There have been many favorable comments on the way historic objects are displayed both in the House and the Museum.

It is the purpose of this News Letter to bring to our members the changes which have taken place in the past winter and to indicate the events of the coming spring and summer.

Donations for Acquisitions. During the year 1959, \$561.00 in gifts were given to the Society for the purchase of needed items in the House and Museum. Of this amount \$321.50 has been expended.

A list of acquisitions donated to our Society from November, 1959, through January, 1960, and approved of by the Executive Board, is attached to this News Letter. Its impressive list shows the interest which members and non-members have in our organization.

Judson House

The work in both the Hawley and the old War room is now nearing completion.

The Hawley room has been papered with a copy of a fine old wallpaper, the woodwork and floors cleaned and treated. The furniture has been relocated and new curtains made from old homespun sheets are at the windows. The result is very gratifying and as you enter the room, there is a feeling of space and a well cared for look which the room never had before.

The small room where the war relics were housed has now been made into a room to display the handwork of women from the period of 1763 thru 1899. We have on display beautifully embroidered and all hand made baby dresses, caps, shirts, bibs, and petticoats, ladies chemise, caps, collars, handkerchiefs and other wearing apparel. We also have hand made quilts, coverlets, blankets and since about 1800, the trend went to painting, there are good examples of theorem work, spatter, pith, primitive and water colors being shown.

With these two rooms completed, there remains the halls and stairway to be done. and they will receive our attention as soon as other work is completed.

Mrs. Helen Hiner
Chairman, Special House Committee

The Museum

We are trying in the Museum to tell a coherent story through the medium of historic objects. Unrelated objects placed in a display case mean little to the observer. However, in a Civil War exhibit for example, when you can actually see and sometimes touch clothing, equipment, maps and letters used by the soldiers of the North and South, then the war takes on a new meaning. We are trying to do "interpretive" exhibits combining, as Dr. Toole, director of the Museum of the City of N.Y. suggests, the artifact with art. The utilization of color, light and placement tends to heighten the meaning of the article.

I am sure our progress seems slow. A completed exhibit appears simple. There are four steps in completing a display; first, selecting subject material which will appeal to varying tastes and interests, adults and children; second, research into authenticity of material; third, restoring items to be used; fourth, actually arranging the display.

We are planning for two of our newly installed cases on the lower floor of the Museum, a Civil War display, one case for the soldier and his equipment, the other for the lady at home.

The greatest accomplishment so far in the Museum has been the organization of the Library. This has been Mr. Stanley Selleck's project for the past four months. He has worked an unbelievable number of hours. First he classified and catalogued some 800 books. Then he worked with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Beardsley designing a bookcase to house all the books and magazines. Mr. Johnson furnished a carpenter to build the case, and the staining was done by willing volunteers. The books are now mended and placed in orderly rows in the bookcase.

Come and see our new acquisitions!

Alma Gay Fowler
Chairman, Requisitions Committee

Brochure and Postal cards

A new brochure describing Judson House and the Historical Museum will soon be ready for circulation. This brochure will be put in ^{with} letters which the Shakespeare Theatre is sending out to its summer patrons. A map of Stratford, showing the location of Judson House will be on the back of the brochure.

Mr. & Mrs. Leo Miller have donated funds for an advertisement in Antiques Magazine as well as for the expense of some new black and white postal cards of the House and Museum. Our first adventure into a colored postal card has been authorized by the Executive Board.

Odds and Ends of News

Beginning May 1 and until after Labor Day, the House and Museum will be open to the public on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The change in time has been necessary to attract visitors to the Shakespeare Theatre and week-end tourists.

The spring "open house" and tea will be held on Saturday, April 30 for members of the Society.

At the May 20 program, Mr. Foster M. Johnson will speak on: Thomas Short, First Connecticut Printer.

Our annual picnic will take place on July 22. Mr. Harold Lovell will continue his story on: Early Stratford.