



## STRATFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Newsletter



Friday, November 17, is the date of the next general meeting of the Stratford Historical Society, with the Methodist Church Hall at 8:00 P.M. the place and time. Mrs. Margaret Standley of Shelton will speak on the "Art of Spinning" and will demonstrate the ancient craft by using a small spinning wheel she brought from the Orkney Islands in Scotland where she was born. She will also demonstrate several knitting stitches.

Hiram Tindall, Chairman of the Program Committee, announces Friday, January 26, and Wednesday, March 21, as dates for ensuing meetings. The speaker for the January meeting is expected to be Dr. Howard Odell, professor of history at Southern Connecticut State College (and long-time antiques "buff") whose topic will be, "The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Antique Collecting."

The Wednesday meeting in March is in accord with an Executive Board decision to schedule one non-Friday meeting to see if attendance might improve if the weekend period was avoided. By vote of the Board also, the meeting in Stratford on Saturday, May 19, of the Connecticut League of Historical Societies will also be our Society's regular May meeting with every member urged to attend any or all of the interesting sessions of the League usually scheduled to begin at 10:00 A.M. and extending into the afternoon.

As a new president assumes duties it is appropriate to list major objectives, all, of course, subject to Board approval if any require legislative action. An overriding one is to continue the general administration following examples of care and conscientious effort set by former presidents. Others certainly must be seeing to the completion of projects already started: (1) razing the Sammis house with consequent filling, grading, and seeding of the area, (2) completion of the inventory and storage of Museum items, (3) opening of the renovated Catherine T. Mitchell Museum to the public as soon as possible compatible with the time and energy of willing workers, (4) a major town-wide membership campaign in 1973 as one way of giving wider recognition to our Society and especially to the Captain David Judson House on the 250th anniversary of its basic construction in 1723 and to the Judson descendants, and (5) such planning as will enable our Society to play well its role as host to the State League.

Among our objectives also are continued and increased cooperation with the local Shakespeare Theatre and other tourist oriented organizations to make the tour of our House and Museum available to more people; the organization and training of a larger hostess group, - very much the concern of Mrs. Mussler, our hostess chairman; the full implementation of our Museum utilizing the new display areas to greatest advantage.

The House is now closed until April 1. Mr. Leete Robbins reports a total of 1397 visitors for the season through October, 609 adults and 788 students and children. Mrs. Virginia Mussler reports that 17 volunteers gave 126 hours of assistance through Sept. 22. The Society is very grateful indeed to all of these people. A recent opportunity to be present at the visitation of 56 fourth grade children from a Huntington

school greatly impressed this observer with the thorough, careful and knowledgeable attention our visitors receive, truly education at its best.

It will be of interest to review financial contributions for the renovation of the Museum in 1971-72:

\$7782.00 given by an anonymous donor who became interested in the work which volunteers were doing for the Society. The person who gave this generous gift realized that without financial assistance it would be impossible for the Society to keep the Sammis property or complete the renovation of the Museum. There were three stipulations attached to the gift, all of which were accepted by the Executive Board and by Society members in general meeting: (1) payment of the \$4000 mortgage on the Sammis property, (2) completion of the renovation of the second floor of the Museum as specified in plans drawn up by a Museum architect, (3) the use of the remaining "balance of the gift and your (Stratford Historical Society's) own resources to raze the former Sammis house and see that the resultant clear lot be properly grassed and/or landscaped. Finally, it would be understood that your Society would have a moral obligation to retain possession of the Sammis property (land) as long as such possession is economically feasible."

The Society is indeed indebted to our "angel" for this generous gift and the recognition to the many volunteers who have contributed over 2000 hours of their skilled assistance since January of this year in the major undertaking of Museum renovation and the cataloging and preservation, still not complete, of the many articles related to Stratford's history.

\$200.00 Given by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Fowler in memory of Mrs. Fowler's father, M.W. Murray.

\$150.00 Given by friends to be added to the Museum Renovation Fund in memory of M.W. Murray.

\$92.00 Given by the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Einar Larson in memory of Mrs. Larson's mother, Mrs. Marie Berg.

\$300.00 Given by Miss Harriet Blakeman, \$200 for general expenses and \$100 for a new Society Seal.

\$100.00 Given by Miss Katharine Judson to be used toward Judson House expenses.

The Society is very grateful also to Mr. Howard R. Smith for the construction of a board fence around the northwest section of the front Judson House lawn in the style of the fence which appears in pictures of the House taken in the middle 1800's. Members of the Stratford Garden Club and the Town Park Department have contributed much to the work of beautifying our lawns and flower beds, and we thank them.

It is a special pleasure to welcome to our Society these recently enrolled members: Mrs. Robert F. Altieri, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Chadwick, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Dobkin, Mr. George C. Lay, Mr. and Mrs. David Knight, Miss Kathleen Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson H. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rawson, and Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Markham.

When you read this, the November 4 auction will be a thing of the past. Writing now before the auction to meet a deadline, the auction chairman can only report that a favorable outcome of the auction seems assured and wishes to express his thanks to the many committee members and donors of articles who are helping in this event.

Elden H. Dustin, President