



STRATFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

January 15, 1973



Dr. Howard Odell, professor of history at Southern Connecticut State College, will be the speaker at the next meeting of the Society to be held at 8:00 P.M. in the Methodist Church Hall on Friday, January 26th. As a long-time antiques student and collector, Dr. Odell's topic will be "The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Antique Collecting." Mrs. Richardson, who has heard Dr. Odell on a previous occasion, reports that he is "excellent". We hope you will circle this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

Looking ahead to the March meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, Mr. Tindall, chairman of the program committee, has scheduled as speaker Dr. Rudy J. Favretti, professor of horticulture at the University of Connecticut. His topic will be centered around his special interest, colonial gardens. Dr. Favretti is a regular contributor to the New York Times garden section, other garden magazines, and author of books and pamphlets in his field, among them, "New England Colonial Gardens" published by the Stonington, Conn., Pequod Press. He is consultant to Old Sturbridge Village in its early gardens area, and to the Stonington Historical Society in restoration of old gardens and orchards of the Whitehall mansion. We hope that Dr. Favretti will advise us in the landscaping of our Judson House grounds, a project made more imperative by the razing of the Sammis House early this month.

Major volunteer work projects continue at the Museum and House - Tuesdays, Thursdays and sometimes throughout the week. The ladies are checking, inventorying, sorting and in some cases, cleaning both men's and women's costumes, general clothing, and accessories preparatory to storage in boxes of uniform size especially made to fit the compartments of the new clothing storage area of the museum. When this major task is completed, it will be quite easy to locate any item when it is needed for display. (Special note: Mrs. Chapman, accessions committee chairman, states that there is great need for old sheets for the lining of the boxes for clothing storage, and will be most grateful if you would bring any sheets you can spare to the meeting on January 26.)

A men's group has started an ambitious painting program in the interior of Judson House involving areas not redecorated for 15 years and now becoming dingy and flaking in some places. The repainting of the halls, upstairs and down, and the stairway is nearly finished. Miss Celea's room (the upstairs northwest chamber) and the parlor need repainting, as do both the modern and original kitchens. The cellar needs attention, especially the east area. Some professional help in the painting may be necessary if the project is to be finished so that we are "ready for company" April 1.

The successful November 4th Auction yielded a net profit of \$4534.03.

We welcome to our Society the following new members enrolled since the time of the last newsletter: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ricklin, Mr. and Mrs. William Vars, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Charles Woessner, Mrs. Gertrude Elias, Mr. and Mrs. John Boras, Mrs. Mary Hunter Wolf, Mrs. Louis Minatti, Mrs. Robert Switzgable, Mr. Howard Lounsbury, Col. and Mrs. Alfred S. Balsam.

It is with sorrow that we report the deaths, in recent months, of the following members: Miss Jean Peck, Mr. Paul Wagner, and Mr. Carman D. Young. Their families have the sympathy of all of us.

January volunteers to date have included Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. David, Mrs. Switzgable, Mrs. Barrows, Mrs. Hubbell, Mr. and Mrs. Larson, Mr. and Mrs. Fowler, Mr. and Mrs. Dustin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Melcher and Mr. Howard Smith. Mr. John Dolyak, grounds chairman, reports a very successful leaf raking day on November 18 when Boy Scout troops from St. James and Eli Whitney schools provided very good help. The scouts were organized by scout leader Joseph Dimenno, to whom we are very grateful, as well as to the boys. John Sober, Donald Fowler and Elden Dustin and John Dolyak also won "leaf raker badges" on this occasion.

At the December 18 Executive Board meeting the president was authorized to confirm with Mrs. Marguerite Judson that the Society would gratefully accept up to 500 copies of a new paperback edition of The Judson Papers and would reimburse her at the rate of \$1.50 per copy for each copy sold, there being no further obligation to the Society. This most interesting publication of letters passing between Eli Judson in Lansing, N.Y. and his brother, David, in Fairfield, Conn., in the early 1800's, with continuity background provided by Mrs. Judson, has intimate association with our Judson House because both men concerned, sons of the first Abner Judson (1756), were born in our House and the originals of the letters are preserved in our files. The books, to be sold by us at a modest profit, will be a pertinent and educational addition to our offerings of saleable items to members and visitors and are particularly appropriate for this 250th Judson House Anniversary year.

"Help wanted: Paid position as guide - attendant must be filled by April 1 by Stratford Historical Society. Part-time, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Applicants should have interest in and knowledge of colonial American history. A sense of responsibility and a liking for people, especially children, and their education are essential."Mrs. Mussler does not feel that she can continue her regular position in the capacity described above any longer. We are sorry; she was so good in her work, and we are grateful. We are happy that she will continue as Chairman of Hostesses on the Executive Board. Please spread the word that we are seeking candidates for this work. They should communicate with the president.

The 250th Anniversary Membership Drive Committee, headed by Donald Fowler, is meeting and drawing up final plans for this important project. You will be informed as to details by special letter. Certainly we need new members; their contribution of interest and assistance is needed by us, and we have something important to offer them as we continue our program of education and preservation of our town's heritage. Increased financial aid is a "must" also as we look ahead to many projects, from routine house painting to such a major undertaking as the restoration of "Mr. Booth's room", the south chamber with fireplace, to the state it was in when it was the special living area of Mrs. Phoebe Judson, widow of Abner Judson, in 1814.

Incidentally, Mr. Judson's will provided that Phoebe Judson should also have ".....one half of the Lower Kitchen and one half of the Milk Room (area of the current bottle display in the cellar?) andthe privilege of passing and repassing into theKitchen (lower) to the oven to Bake & from then (there?) to the South Door to the Well and Back again....." (Research done by Raymond Cable, chairman of history and research.)

Remember: Next meeting, Friday, January 26th.

Elden H. Dustin
President