



The Stratford Historical Society

NEWS LETTER

March 5, 1974

WEDNESDAY, March 20, is the date of the next meeting of the Stratford Historical Society when Lowell Hess of Southport will speak on "Building Techniques of the Late 17th and Early 18th Centuries in New England". Mr. Hess has been involved in the restoration of old houses for over 20 years and has designed houses in colonial style. He displays and explains demonstration models of old houses and brings with him a collection of old tools the use of which he describes.

The meeting will be held in the Methodist Church Hall at 8:00 P.M. Please note that it is on WEDNESDAY, March 20, a continuation of last year's plan to hold one meeting not on Friday. Mrs. Irving Dobkin, Hospitality Chairman, announces that Mrs. Vincent Hardy will be in charge of refreshments.

We are sure that you have noticed a new Newsletter heading design. We are most grateful to Einar Larson for making this excellent drawing of the House and Museum and to Leslie Oakman for preparing the typographical work involved. Letterheads for the Society will be done using this drawing with additional typographical effects by Mr. Oakman and it will also appear on a new supply of visitors' brochures. Mr. Larson is also giving many hours to the preparation of exhibits as suggested by Mr. Bowditch. Mr. Larson's contribution to the Society over the years is beyond estimate.

With this issue of the Newsletter you will find a nearly current report of the 1973-1976 Membership Fund Raising Drive. To have achieved nearly 1/5 th of its \$50,000 fund goal and to have increased its membership by 1/3 rd in under four months is certainly encouraging. The plea for further support from members and the return envelope enclosed should not be considered by those who have already contributed in various ways as further pressure.

John Dolyak, Grounds Chairman, has set Saturday morning, April 13, as rake-the-grounds day. Many hands make light work - gentlemen, please set aside this morning to help. Call Mr. Dolyak at 375-2469 to let him know you are coming, bring your sweep rake, and join the party. There will be a coffee break.

At a meeting of the Executive Board on February 25, two resignations were considered with regret: Mrs. Frank S. Bunnell from the 3rd Vice-Presidency, and Mrs. Frank Mussler from the Chairmanship of hostesses. The wise counsel of these dedicated ladies at Board Meetings will be greatly missed. The corresponding secretary was instructed to communicate regrets at their leaving the Board and commendations for years of most helpful service to these retiring Board members.

At the February meeting the Board voted: to defer the filling of the position of 3rd Vice President until the annual meeting in September; to recommend to the general membership at the March meeting that Mrs. Mussler be given honorary membership (Mrs. Bunnell is a permanent member); to appoint Mrs. Stephen Lawrence to the Board as Chairman of Hostesses; to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee that \$2,000 of the endowment funds accumulated from the current drive be invested in 2 1/2 year savings certificates in the Bank of Stratford

and that 100 shares of Southern New England Telephone Co. stock be purchased from these funds as a further investment; that several items of silver plate, given to the Society without restriction and of no interest in our silver collection, be disposed of to best advantage by the Accessions Committee; that investigation be made of the publishing of a new edition of Mr. Wilcoxson's "History of Stratford".

When Mrs. Mussler confirmed what she told us in the fall that she preferred not to carry on in the demanding work she did so well, the showing of the House to visitors on a regular Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday basis, along with scheduling group visitations, we approached Mrs. Stephen Lawrence, who worked very effectively with Mrs. Mussler last year, with the plea that she take this position. We are happy to report that Mrs. Lawrence agreed to take this important work. By a pleasant coincidence, Mrs. Lawrence is continuing in a sense the work of her grandmother, Mrs. Adelaide Gunther, one of the founders of the Society in 1925 and the years following.

The Judson House will be open to visitors Wednesday, April 3, and every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday thereafter through October (except Easter Sunday, April 14). We are especially desirous that new members visit their Society's House this spring and are suggesting, to avoid all coming at the same time, that new members whose names begin A-G visit on the weekend of April 20-21; H-Q, April 27-28; R-Z, May 4-5. Come Wednesday, come anytime; the schedule listed is just a suggestion. It will be helpful to our receptionists if you will bring your membership card.

The repainting of the linen room and the kitchen chamber is now complete, even to the sanding and refinishing of the floor of Mr. Booth's room (in earlier days, Miss Cornelia Curtis' room) by Mr. Smith, buildings chairman. The electrical work and furnace room construction in the House cellar are ready for finishing touches. The construction work dust makes cleaning of the House a bigger task this year. The volunteer work group has made silver cleaning, cataloging, and storage a current major project. Mrs. Edward Boyhen has made fabric silver storage bags and will be in charge of curtains, bed hangings etc. in the House. Work on Museum exhibits demands such meticulous and time consuming effort that Museum opening to all visitors as a regular part of visitation appears farther in the future than we originally thought.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mrs. Benjamin Graham at the death of her husband. Mr. and Mrs. Graham have been loyal Society Members. Our Society was also saddened by the death of our member, Mrs. Charles Nixdorff, who was a strong supporter in quiet ways.

We thank especially: Mr. Michael Aurelia, one of our members, who donated his services as speaker at the January meeting, a well prepared and beautifully illustrated talk on the "Stratford Shoreline"; Miss Elizabeth Seeley for making it possible for us to have a projection screen once owned by a deceased member, Mr. Robert Philo Shelton; M. Lewis Chaplowe for legal assistance in connection with a mortgage investment settlement.

Special instructional sessions continue for additional guiding staff members who will assist as docents this year. On Monday evening, March 4, Mr. Hiram Tindall spoke to them and showed slides on "Chinese Export Porcelain", and on March 27 they will visit the Garvan collection in New Haven.

Word has just been received (3/7/74) of the death of Mrs. Frank Scott (Susan) Bunnell. All who knew her in our Society and community at large feel a great sense of personal loss and sadness. Just a year ago she was working at the Judson House helping to make new curtains. This is but one of the many quiet ways through which she helped us. She was especially interested in our library and gave \$250. for its development in memory of her husband, Frank Scott Bunnell, who was instrumental in starting the Society's Library. For many years she was our third vice-president, attended Board meetings faithfully, and, with gracious observations and advice, took an active part in the business of the Society. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her family and to Mrs. Stanley Sellick, with whom Mrs. Bunnell lived. PLEASE CIRCLE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, on your calendar, to remind you of the next meeting.

Elden H. Dustin, President