



Judson House, 967 Academy Hill, Built C1750
and Catharine B. Mitchell Museum, 1958

The Stratford Historical Society

Box 382, Stratford, Connecticut 06497
Telephone 378-0630

September, 1983
ANNUAL MEETING

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: FRIDAY, SEPT. 16, 1983 at 8:00 pm
at the STRATFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Main Street.

Following a brief business meeting which will include election of officers for the new year, Lewis Knapp, a past president of the Society will present a program entitled The Photographers of Old Stratford. Mr. Knapp has uncovered several collections of old photographic material over the past few years, and is still trying to identify and document the pictures.

Lew will tell us what he has found in three large groups of photos which cover the half century from 1880-1930, and are the works of Frederick C. Beach, E. Bedell Benjamin, and W. Howard Wilcoxson. These amateur photographers documented bits of Stratford history which have otherwise disappeared in time.

The Beach plates and the Benjamin plates are mostly in the form of lantern slides. Lew will show us the magic lantern and some of the slides and describe how they were made.

The Wilcoxson material consists of glass plate negatives; nearly 3,000 of them. Many are in poor shape, or are of other places, but a few hundred of them form a unique and important record of Stratford's history from about 1908-1930. The 1984 Historical Society calendar shows fifteen of these pictures.

Lew has converted many of the slide and negative plates to 35mm slides. We will show them to you and ask you to help identify them. So come to the meeting and bring your memories with you.

It seems most fitting that the program for the 58th Annual Meeting of the Stratford Historical Society should deal with views of old Stratford. You may remember that last year's program was a similar one given by Donald Fowler. Perhaps this "looking back" is becoming an annual tradition.

Exhibits--The newest exhibit "History Repeats Itself--Stratford's Elegance of Yesterday ≠ Today's Style" has been especially successful and has attracted visitors from as far as Tempe, Arizona. The three-part exhibit, researched by Alma Fowler and designed by Einar Larson, is a tribute to some 19th century members of prominent Stratford families.

(Over)

The Society is often mistaken as having an interest only in 17th and 18th century history and artifacts, but such is not the case. The lack of exhibit space and volunteer staff prevents the showing of more of our stored treasures.

Come to a PARTY--on Sunday, Oct. 23 from 3 to 5 pm at Christ Episcopal Church and the Catharine B. Mitchell Museum.

Members and guests are invited and urged to attend this Special Open House to celebrate the newest exhibit in the Museum, "History Repeats Itself", and to honor the two people most responsible for its creation: Alma Fowler and Einar Larson. We are so proud of them and so pleased with the fruit of their labors that we wish to celebrate in this way. Please come first to the church for a small "tea party" and then cross the street to view The Exhibit and perhaps visit Judson House.

Remember, our visiting season ends on Nov. 1. Why not take this opportunity to visit "your" Society? Sunday, Oct. 23 from 3 to 5 pm.

Correspondence--Do you receive your Newsletter in time to plan to attend the Meeting which is being announced? Are you aware of the illness, birthday, death, etc. of a Society member? Please contact Joyce Bradbury, 57 Cowles St., Milford, CT. 06460, 874-2759 with any answers to these questions.

Book of Remembrance--contributions received by Velmore Spamer, Assistant Treasurer, since the last Newsletter:

In memory of:
Edwin J. Evers

Given by:
Donald and Alma Fowler

Grounds and Landscape/Colonial Gardens--There has been much work by these two committees for improvement of the plantings on our property. Thanks to Memorial contributions several trees and bushes have been planted. With the expertise of Mr. Neil Malchisky of Lordship, a landscape architect with the Queens Botanical Garden, the committees have several projects under consideration.

The initial contribution of \$500 was made in June, 1982 by Susan W. Radel in memory of her mother Beatrice Smith Wheeler who graduated from Stratford High School in 1934 and spent her last years in Stratford. Mrs. Wheeler was the sister of the late Viola V. Johnson, a longtime, Society member.

In an accompanying letter, the work of the committees was complimented by Ms. Radel and it was stated that the contribution "for the improvement and augmentation of the landscaping and gardens" was made in the hope that the property might be unified and that further contributions to the committees' work might be encouraged.

Additional contributions were given by the family and friends of Harold V. Bailey because of his love of gardens. Several members of Mr. Bailey's family have volunteered to plant laurel and blueberry bushes.

Bill Reid, Grounds Chairman, Howard Smith, Buildings Chairman,

and Vincent Hardy, Board member and neighbor to the east have kept watering these newest plantings plus two new semi-dwarf apple trees throughout this very dry summer. The plantings are thriving and we thank these men.

Calendars for 1984--The Wilcoxson collection "Old Photographs of Stratford" 1984 calendars have been selling well. In fact, only 200 remain available from our original printing of 1,000. Members who have not already purchased calendars or who wish additional ones are urged to buy them at Judson House during regular visiting hours through October or at the General Meeting on Sept. 16. Catalano's News Store in Stratford Center has graciously offered to sell calendars for us at no profit to themselves. We thank them for this kindness. There are, as stated before, only 200 calendars left. Don't wait too long to obtain yours. Whether or not there will be an additional printing is uncertain. The price is \$4.00 each; out-of-town orders should be mailed to P.O. Box 382, Stratford, Ct 06497 and should include \$5.00 per copy ordered.

The delightful Lippincott's Magazine reprint of Ellen W. Olney's "Stratford-on-the-Sound" is available at these same places at \$3.00 per copy and should be a part of your Stratford Historical collection.

And since you are completing this collection, you should also include "The Judson Papers" by Marguerite Judson. This vivid, nostalgic, historical document which is available from the Society for \$2.00 per copy includes most interesting correspondence between David Judson, postmaster and storekeeper in Fairfield and his beloved brother, Eli, innkeeper in Lansingburgh, N.Y. in the early 1800's. The two brothers were born in our own Judson House, sons of the first Abner Judson, grandsons of Captain David Judson. The letters are accompanied by delightful and scholarly commentary by Mrs. Judson.

Buildings--The continued maintenance of an 18th century structure is something which requires diligence and constant observation. In seeking the entry point of carpenter ants found in the gift shop area of Judson House, Howard Smith, Buildings Chairman, discovered that the ants had invaded the southeast sill of the House from the corner to the back door. Therefore, it is now necessary to replace this sill. (We have previously had to replace two other sills, as you may recall.) It is also necessary to replace the outer door to the lower kitchen of Judson House.

The Governing Board has approved the commencement of these two projects based upon a preliminary estimate of \$2,500 for the total job. The Society would be most pleased to receive contributions to this project. Your response with contributions to help defray the expense of the new roof and repair of the chimney two years ago was most gratifying. Perhaps there can be equal response to this present need. Thank you for considering the idea.

Accessions and Inventory--Since you so not often hear from either of these two committees which work so diligently throughout the year on the collections of the Society, I felt it appropriate to give you a very brief list of the highlights of their efforts now that the Society's year is ending.

(Over)

Both committees have been working toward completion of the enormous task of having all of the collection catalogued. For many years, in the early days of the Society, donations were carefully listed and given accession numbers. Very frequently, these same items were then placed in boxes and labeled "to be catalogued" or "to be inventoried". These are the items which are now being evaluated in terms of their place in the collection. This is a multi-faceted, time consuming, slow task which is being done very well.

The clothing collection has been evaluated and items which are soiled, inappropriate or beyond our ability to repair have been removed to auction with the approval of the Governing Board. This removal has given us space to upgrade the clothing collection. The de-accessioning process has led to the attempt to simplify and clarify the card file.

Marion Herb, Muriel Cumpstone, and Mary Dickgiesser have most recently been accessioning and cataloging items once the property of Dr. Frank Scott Bunnell, formerly in the possession of Bunnell High School but removed to the Society's care for safekeeping at the request of Mrs. Catherine Detweiler, daughter of Dr. Bunnell.

There have been other projects throughout the year which these committees have tackled..projects too numerous to list here.

Library--Chairman Lillian Larson, Ruth Barrows, and Jean Wilcoxson continue to accession and catalog books, newspaper articles, etc. which have been acquired through purchase or donation. Genealogy inquiries are answered by Raymond Cable, Ruth Barrows, or Lillian Larson.

Many visitors have used the library for research projects on Tuesdays and by appointment on other days. Several Historical Societies have visited to learn our cataloging methods and other phases of our work.

Hospitality--Chairman Janet Jacopian reports that attendance at General Membership meetings in the 1982-83 year was approximately 100 per meeting, with the exception of May when 65 attended. Thanks to her and her committee: Jane Lafferty, Adelaide Langbein, Jan Jenny, Lori Laput, Cuddles Millward, and Doris Carson for a marvelous year.

Hosts/Hostesses--I would like to express my deepest thanks to the following persons who so graciously shared the position of chairman and the work of this committee: Margaret Van Gieson, Bonnie Paradise, and Selma Dobkin. We will need people to be hosts/hostesses at Judson House through October. If you can give three hours on any Wed., Sat., or Sun. please call Margaret Van Gieson at 378-5555 and offer to help. It will make her job so much easier.

Education--In order to begin preparation for the 1984 Docent training program, we request that you call Betty Applegate at 377-4224 to express your interest in becoming a docent at Judson House. Don't be afraid to volunteer in this area. It is a marvelous way to learn the history of "your" house and your town.

Endowment Fund--Accompanying this Newsletter is a copy of the list of Memorial Gifts to the Endowment Fund. You should be aware that the interest from this Fund last year was approximately \$10,000, which represents 40% of our annual budget. Please keep in mind the fact that gifts to this fund need not be memorials.

Old Derby Historical Society--presents an International Heirloom Exhibit: Quilts, Needlework, art, and Artifacts--Sat., Sept. 17, 1983 10 am to 4 pm at Christ Episcopal Church, South Cliff St., Ansonia. Tickets at \$1.50 are available at the door.

*****Since this is my last Newsletter as President of the Society, I would like to take a moment to mention some of the fine things which have happened in the past three years: New exhibit case built, based on a design by George Bowditch (professional museum consultant); Constitution and By-Laws revised; Windows in Judson House revitalized; North chamber re-exhibited to reflect the 1761 will of Capt. David Judson; New wood shingle roof and new exterior chimney constructed on Judson House; Greatly successful Harvest Supper in Nov., 1980; Burritt Bookcase loaned to Baldwin Center; New slate walk between House and Museum; Special loan exhibit of Decoys of Stratford; Acquisition of Wilcoxson estate; Sept., 1981 appearance on Academy Hill by the Fifth Conn. Regiment; Boston Fine Arts Museum borrowed our 1666 L. C. (Levi Curtis) carpenter's plane for its "New England Begins" exhibit; "Old Photographs of Stratford" calendar for 1984; Hosted June meeting of Conn. League of Historical Societies and Jan. workshop for Fairfield County Historical Societies and Libraries presented by New Haven Colony Historical Society; not to mention the wonderful fellowship and co-operation of members and volunteers.

These have been busy, productive years for the Society. We have grown in membership and involved ourselves in a wide variety of activities. My sincere thanks to all members of the Governing Board and the membership, all of whom have been so faithful in attendance at meetings and willing to help with the work of the Society. I have had a wonderfully rewarding three years as President working with all of you to preserve the history of Stratford and to share our knowledge in order to educate others about the importance of Stratford's past. I am proud to have had the opportunity to preside over this very special organization. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol H. Lovell

Mrs. Todd B. Lovell,
President

STRATFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sept., 1983

Memorial Gifts to the Endowment Fund, 1925-1983

REQUESTS

Rachel W. Buttrick	\$ 268.45
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Judson	5,350.00
Beatrice & Harold Lovell	10,000.00
Harriett Sanborn	6,107.21
Dorothy Staples	1,000.00

GIFTS

In Memory of:

Given By:

Carlos & Helen B. Blakeman	Miss Harriet B. Blakeman	\$13,000
Frances Blakeman	Miss Harriet B. Blakeman	2,000
Frank E. Blakeman	Mrs. Frank E. Blakeman	500
Selah Blakeman	Miss Harriet B. Blakeman	1,200
Fred Booth	Ruth W. Worthen	25
Susan Plant Bunnell	Friends	355
Sophie Chaplowe	Isadore Chaplowe	25
Sophie Chaplowe	Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Chaplowe	10
Arthur Chapman	Co-workers of Mrs. Vincent Chapman	65
Mrs. Roger Cole	Mr. & Mrs. Donald W. Fowler	20
Ida J. Ramelmeyer	Allen Fanslow, Jr.	10
Dorothy Gish	Miss Katherine Judson	250
Mr. & Mrs. John Nicols Judson	Lillian and Dorothy Gish Foundation	100
Mr. & Mrs. John Nicols Judson	Katherine Judson	1,650
Kenneth Judson	His Parents	350
Mrs. Kenneth Judson	W.K & M.D. Kerr	10
Henry I. Judson	Frances H. Balsam	2,000
Sarah Elizabeth Judson	William H. & Horace H. Judson	1,000
Mrs. Earl Hawley	Mrs. W. E. Hawley	100
Elizabeth Curtis Lawrence	The Docents	70
Beatrice Beach Lovell	Friends	60
Georgie J. Moomjian	Mrs. Eugenie Moomjian	5
Charles E. & Elizabeth S. Nixdorff	Mrs. Charles E. Nixdorff	3,228.30
Mrs. Raymond O'Connor	Mr. & Mrs. Donald W. Fowler	20
Marie Elizabeth Peck	Georgianna Peck LeCount	100
Mary Russell Peterson	Ira Peterson	100
Elizabeth French Sammis	Friends	300
Elizabeth French Sammis	Stratford Trust Co. on her 100th birthday	1,000
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander H. Trumbull	Mrs. Marion T. Cruikshank	100
Henry Van Gieson	Family & Friends	380
Natalie Wilcoxson	Mrs. William Slack	50
Natalie Wilcoxson	Miss Mildred Broderick	25

(Over)

Elizabeth P. Wilson
Fred Wilcoxson

Mr. & Mrs. Harry Wood

Fred Wilcoxson

Charles A. Wilson, Jr.
Stratford Firefighters
Local #998

By their wills

Stratford Firefighters
Local #998

100

50

1,200

25