

The Stratford Historical Society

Box 382, Stratford, Connecticut 06497
Telephone 378-0630



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

JANUARY, 1985

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, FRIDAY, JAN. 25, 1985 at 8 P. M. at
STRATFORD METHODIST CHURCH, MAIN STREET, STRATFORD

Following a short business meeting, our curator Hiram Tindall will present a program on the China Trade. The Stratford Historical Society has a rich and varied collection of treasures from the China Trade, many of which have never been exhibited. Mr. Tindall will present a slide program featuring some of the more important of these as well as representative items from various areas: porcelain, silver, fabrics, furniture, ivories, painting, baskets, pewter, lacquer fans, maps and ships logs. Most of these artifacts were donated by descendants of Stratford's own sea captains engaged in the China Trade. Two of our more important ones were Captain John W. Sterling, whose son presented Sterling Library to Yale University and Captain Deliverance Pulaski Benjamin. We own the navigation charts and maps of the latter and the ships logs of the former.

On the same subject an artifact from our China Trade collection, a fine blue silk embroidered apron, will go on view on February 29th at the Peabody Museum in Salem, Mass.

One of the delights in Winter is to plan trips for the warm weather months. In that vein a joint tour of Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts is being planned by the Trumbull and Stratford Historical Societies on Saturday, May 18 and Sunday May 19. The tour price of \$149.00 per person includes overnight hotel accommodations, two lunches, one dinner and one breakfast. Sightseeing includes Plymouth Plantation, the outdoor museum of 17th century Plymouth where you learn how the Pilgrims lived. Villagers work at period crafts, cooking, and gardening chores while answering visitor's questions in the dialect of the day. Included also is a visit on the Mayflower and Pilgrim Hall. Busses or a bus will pick up at both Trumbull and Stratford. A deposit of \$50.00 is needed to confirm your reservation by February 15, 1985. Deposit check is to be sent to Biebel Travel, 2362 Main St. Stratford to the attention of Elvira Ludford.

We are also considering a day trip to Historic Deerfield, Mass. during the coming summer or fall. Deerfield was the last outpost on New England's frontier when it was settled in 1669. The present village was founded in 1952 to carry on the tradition of historic preservation. It maintains 12 house museums, a research library and an active education program—all devoted to the study of the history of Deerfield; the culture of the Conn. Valley and the arts in early American life. Deerfield Inn is in the restored area where we can arrange for lunch. Guests would be welcome.

If either or both of these trips appeal to you, please fill out the tear off at the end of the letter and mail it to the address given. You may also call me (378-8025) for the Plymouth Trip or Marion Herb for the Deerfield one (375-9573).

Our touring season at Judson House concluded in November. All totaled we had 1104 visitors! Some individuals were from as far away as France and others from as close as Elm Street. We hosted twenty two groups, most of them from surrounding schools (including Yale) as well as clubs. As always our scheduling secretary, Carol Brancato, would be glad to arrange for your groups to tour Judson House and Museum starting in mid-April.

Our docents and weavers volunteered about 172 hours making colonial life real to those visitors. They are so essential to implementing our Societie's goal of "carrying on an active educational program for children and adults." For those interested in becoming a docent, Betty Applegate our education chairman will start training classes on Thursday, Jan. 24 at 9:30. You may call her at 377-4224 to register.

Our 1985 Calendar sale is drawing near the end. We have calendars still available and they may be purchased at any of the 10 outlets mentioned in the last newsletter or at the Museum on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 1:00 p. m.

We need volunteers to sew! The quilt which was made and raffled last year was a wonderful success! It was a new idea which involved many Society members-sewing, selling tickets, publicity, etc. The funds raised by the project were very important to our treasury. Therefore, we are going to make another quilt! This one will be stenciled, not pieced, and should require less time to complete. Please come to help us create another beautiful quilt. Call Muriel Cumpstone (377-6539) or Carol Lovell (375-3569). We will meet at the Museum on Jan. 30, 1985 at 7:30 p. m. to get under way. There is also a tear off at the end of the letter to indicate your interest.

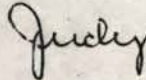
We are most pleased to have received a contribution of \$250.00 from Miss Katherine Judson recently. Our Judson House is forever in need of restoration and we will apply the funds toward this on going project.

One of the privileges of being a member of the Stratford Historical Society is the use of our library for research and genealogical study. (It is not a circulating library.) Among the interesting records is the account book of Nehemiah and Freeman Curtis (father and son). From 1811 to 1856 Freeman Curtis kept a general store on the west side of Main Street in the area of Paradise Green. His account book reveals many fascinating sidelights to life in Stratford over 150 years ago. The diversity of his stock and services is amazing-everything from yard goods which were apparently woven and dyed there to wagon repair to groceries. You could hire out a team of horses or oxen for a days work too! Perhaps you would find these grocery prices interesting. Potatoes at 33¢ a bushel and apples at the same price. Milk was 4¢ a quart; eggs sold at a penny each, flour (brown) at 23¢ a sack; sider at 6¢; a bushel of clams for 67¢; pork at 10¢ a pound and a 19 lb. turkey for \$1.26. People of the mid nineteenth century appear to have bought in bulk-vegetables sold by the bushel and cider by the barrel(they varied in size from 5 to 18 gal. in volume). Until about 1825 the British system of pounds, shillings, and pence was the accepted means of exchange. Only after that were the familiar (to us) dollars and cents used.

Before I close just one request from the Inventory Committee: They are in need of an electric typewriter (or maybe two!) to facilitate their work. Please contact Muriel Cumpstone (377-6539) if you have a spare!

I am looking forward to seeing you on Jan. 25 for China Trade. (In case of inclement weather a postponement will be announced on WICC).

Sincerely,



Judith M. Kurmay, President
(Mrs. F. Paul Kurmay)

Please circle the trip(s) that interest you: Plymouth Plantation (May 18 19) Deerfield and address to: Trips, Box 382 Stratford Historical Society, Stratford, Ct. 06497.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

I am interested in helping on the quilt project. I will _____ or will not _____ be present on Jan. 30 at 7:30 p. m.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Send to : Quilt Project, Stratford Historical Society, Box 382, Stratford, Ct. 06497