

Town Settled 1639

Society Organized 1925



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

May, 1988

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: May 27, 1988--Stratford United Methodist
8:00 PM Church-Parish Hall
2600 Main St.

"CONNECTICUT ARTISTS" will be a slide lecture program presented by Dorothy Cantor--Director of the Education Dept. at the Waterbury Mattatuck Museum.

Mrs. Cantor explores the questions: Why did so many important New York City artists take up residence in Connecticut? How did living in Connecticut affect their art work? What's happening in Connecticut art today?

Using quotes and anecdotes from artists' diaries and biographies, this program takes a fresh look at some of the great figures in American art. Illustrations include many examples from the Mattatuck's Connecticut Artists Collection, the only collection in the state devoted to this subject.

Stratford's own Calvin Curtis will be included in the program with both slides from the Mattatuck Museum's collection and examples of his work from the collection of the Stratford Historical Society.

The program concludes by focusing on the life and work of three contemporary Connecticut artists whose work illustrates the diversity and excellence of Connecticut art today.

Mrs. Cantor holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from the Univ. of Rochester where she majored in Art History with a particular interest in American art and architecture. She has lectured in Art History at Tunxis Community College and has been Director of Education at the Mattatuck Museum for 12 years.

Please bring a friend to this most interesting meeting. Remember, all of our general membership meetings are open to the public.

ANTIQUÉ SHOW--Thanks to the many members who worked so diligently making our 1988 Antique Show the most successful ever. After all bills are paid we will have cleared over \$5,000!! Very good for a one-day show--with many days of work. Thank you again.

Matching Fund donations have been received from Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlosser (Telephone Co.) and Mr. & Mrs. James McCullough (United Technologies). The Society is most appreciative of these annual gifts. Thank you.

The Captain David Judson House and the Catharine Bunnell Mitchell Museum are now open for the season--Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 to 4:00. Thanks to Carol Brancato and Ella McCullough for coordinating the volunteer cleaning crew (docents and members) and for their many hours of cleaning and polishing. The House and Museum look wonderful! Remember, members are admitted without charge. If you have not visited your museum recently, this is the time to do so. Bring your relatives and friends as well.

Miss Harriet Blakeman, one of our oldest members, died on April 15, 1988. She was a direct descendant of Rev. Adam Blakeman who led his flock to Stratford in 1639 and was the first clergyman of the Stratford Congregational Church. As Jack Wardman said at her funeral, "With the passing of Harriet Blakeman, for the first time in 349 years there is no "Blakeman" on the rolls of the First Congregational Church of Stratford." Many of our finest artifacts: furniture, quilts, pictures, baskets, documents, etc. have been gifts of Miss Blakeman. All of these donations have Stratford associations. Miss Blakeman's generosity was constant; her most recent gift, well over \$20,000 from the sale of items from her home, established the Blakeman Fund. We are grateful for her long devotion to the Stratford Historical Society.

Book of Remembrance donations have been received as follows:

In memory of:

Einar M. Larson

Lou Dobkin

Marguerite M. Judson

Given by:

Dr. Theodore & Frances Spivack

May and David Wiggin

Mr. & Mrs. Jack M. Judson & family

Book of Remembrance (continued)

In memory of:

Imogen Lovell Corcoran

Harriet B. Blakeman

Given by:

Todd & Carol Lovell
Lillian Larson
Donald & Alma Fowler

Hiram & Cornelia Tindall
Clare & Vel Spamer
Elizabeth Applegate
Nancy & Donald Calkins
Lillian Larson
Donald & Alma Fowler
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Bradbury
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Bradbury

Our 350th Anniversary (tricentquingenary) celebration planning committee will meet on Thursday, May 19 at 7:30 at the Museum. Membership in this committee is open to everyone who wishes to participate. Please come to help decide what your society will do to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Stratford--1639-1989.

Remember--next general meeting: Friday, May 27, 1988, 8:00 PM, Methodist Church--Connecticut Artists.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Todd B. Lovell, Pres.

P.S.: This meeting of the Conn. League of Historical Societies will be excellent! Meetings are open to the public. Please turn over this page for details.

The Connecticut League of Historical Societies
Annual Meeting
June 4, 1988
Church of Christ Congregational
1075 Main Street
Newington, Connecticut

AMERICAN FOLK ART IN CONNECTICUT

Discovering American Folk Art in Your Collections
Ruth Wolfe, Writer, Folk Art Specialist

Folklife and Folk Art Conservation: A National Mandate
Peter Bartis, Library of Congress
Barbara Fertig, Connecticut Folklorist

Kelsey House: An Introduction to Freehand Wall Paintings
Elizabeth Baxter, Town Historian, Newington

Registration: 10 AM

Brown Bag Lunch

Our June Program



The universal urge to embellish one's surroundings did not escape the settlers of Connecticut. Once their basic needs were met, many creative spirits turned their hands to making utilitarian objects into works of beauty and to decorating walls and furniture in charming and imaginative ways. The freehand painted walls uncovered in Newington's Kelsey House, which those who attend the June program can visit with our group, are a prime example of folk art in early nineteenth-century America.

Our morning speaker, Ruth Wolfe, is a specialist in American folk art with a particular interest in American folk paintings. She served as editorial consultant for *Flowering of American Folk Art*, the comprehensive book by Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, which accompanied the Whitney Museum of American Art's landmark exhibition in 1974. Describing a local historical society as "the community's attic," her slide talk will emphasize the many kinds of folk art likely to appear in such collections.

Following her talk, Mrs. Wolfe will identify works of American folk art from member societies' collections. Please do bring a piece with you — providing you can carry it!

In the afternoon, Folklife Research Specialist Peter Bartis' talk will project a view of folk art as part of the larger picture of folklife. He will speak about the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, which encourages local programs to preserve traditional culture. Of particular interest, Dr. Bartis plans to give practical advice on how historical societies can seek federal funding for Folklife-Folk Art programs.

Connecticut folklorist Barbara Fertig will report on a survey of American Folk Art in Connecticut which she did for the Library of Congress a couple of years ago. Several historical societies and museums were contacted and the results should be of interest to all societies.

While most of us tend to think of American folk art in terms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Folklife Center looks upon it as a living tradition — a view which might make us take a second look around our communities for fine examples of contemporary folk art.

Concluding the program, Elizabeth Baxter and Pamela Toma will give a brief slide introduction to the Kelsey House, built in 1799 by tinsmith Enoch Kelsey. The preservation of the house through the concerted efforts of the townspeople of Newington is a moving story (literally!). Bulldozers were already on the site when Mrs. Baxter, Town Historian, arrived to inspect the house in 1979, having learned there might be historic wall paintings hidden beneath the many layers of paint.

Finding the house, moving it to a new location, and uncovering and restoring the fine trompe l'oeil paintings on plaster in the west parlor and the freehand painted walls in the chambers is a fascinating tale.

The restoration is now complete and a tour of the Kelsey House will follow the program. Also on exhibit is a collection of tinware.

The other property maintained by the Town and the Newington Historical Society and Trust, Inc. is the Kellogg-Eddy House, a restored 1808 home and museum that will also be open for touring.



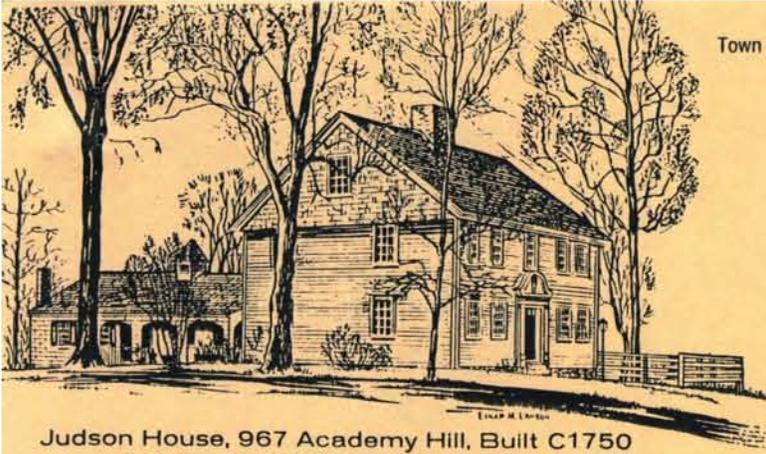
Directions To The June Meeting

The Church of Christ Congregational, 1075 Main Street, Newington, where the June League meeting will be held, is located at the intersection of Routes 175 and 176. There are two parking lots adjacent to the church and one directly across the street.

From I-91 North: Get off at exit 28 for Route 15 (Berlin Turnpike). Follow Route 15 to Route 175 west (Newington exit — there is no exit number). Turn right at bottom of exit ramp. Route 175 West (Cedar Street) will intersect with Route 176 (Main Street) at the second traffic light after Newington Children's Hospital.

From I-91 South: Get off at exit 24. Proceed north on Route 99 to Route 175 West. Go west on Route 175 to intersection with Route 176.

From I-84 East or West: Get off at exit 40 (Corbins Corners). Turn right at end of exit ramp onto Route 71 south. Follow Route 71 south past Central Connecticut State University to the Route 175 East intersection. Turn left onto Route 175 East and proceed to Route 176.



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