



Town Settled 1639

Society Organized 1925

## 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

September 1992

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Friday, September 25, 1992--8:00 pm  
Christ Episcopal Church Parish Hall  
2000 Main St.

Following a brief business meeting which will include Election of Officers for 1992-1993 Town Historian Lewis G. Knapp will present a slide-illustrated talk entitled

### ANATOMY OF AN OLD, OLD HOUSE

Perhaps you saw the House for Sale article in the May issue of Yankee Magazine. It gave a brief description of Town Historian Lew Knapp's ancient House at Mac's Harbor in Stratford. In over a quarter century of living in the 16 room three story house, Lew discovered many things about the house itself and about the families who occupied it and the house that it replaced over a period of 350 years.

The 1962 Historic District Study Committee pegged its date at 1848, but to Lew its French Provincial mansard-roofed exterior looked grossly out of proportion. Sure enough, a search within the walls revealed its origin as a 1730s lean-to house, and documented a host of changes through the centuries. He found the old roof plate between the third and second floors the day he nailed the cat under the floor

The oldest remaining town land record shows the property belonged to Robert Rice, then to Wheeler, Beach, and Chauncey. From the minister's descendant, it went to Capt. Gorham; from the Gorhams to the Meachens, Beaches, and The Captain's Walk. Then on to the Knapps in 1966.

Let Lew tell you about the mysteries he unravelled from clues within the house's walls, and myriad stories of the fascinating characters whose lives it touched. The Harvardite who founded Yale, a seafarer who kept his boat across the street, the errant windmill, an inconspicuous divorce, the nude psychologist, the first electric lights, a dozen would-be innkeepers, the guests who stayed for 25 years--all these and more make up the story.

"It was a happy house," said Marjorie Irving, but whether happy or sometimes sad, the House at Mac's Harbor was home to history.

Bring your friends for a delightful evening.  
Refreshments will be served following the program.

A Judson Family Coat-of-Arms has long been in the collection of the Historical Society. Recently this was photographed in color and 8" x 10" full-color prints are now available from the Society. The cost for each print, including shipping is \$15.00. If you would like to receive a copy please send your request to Coat-of-Arms, Stratford Historical Society, PO Box 382, Stratford CT 06497-1616. Please allow 3-4 weeks for shipment.

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The Addition to the Museum has reached the stage where we have been given permission to begin to move our stored items and cabinets in to the new area. The amount of work space which we will soon have is wonderful..after the many years of VERY cramped quarters. We will be spending the fall and winter months, moving, cleaning, changing exhibits and preparing for our GRAND OPENING in the spring of 1993.

A total of \$2,525 for the Building Fund has been received from the following corporations as matching funds for their employees' gifts to the fund: Chase Manhattan Bank of Connecticut, United Technologies, Southern New England Telephone Co. We are very grateful to these corporations and to their employees, past and present, whose gifts made "matching" possible.

The Building Fund total to date is \$26,218.86 (including matching gifts and pledges). If you have not already made a contribution, please consider doing so to help reach the \$50,000 goal in order that we won't have to use other funds such as a mortgage.

BUILDING FUND Memorial and Honor Gifts (since the last newsletter):

From: Mr. & Mrs. Hildreth Winton  
In memory of Elliot Peck and Donald Fowler

From: Mrs. Florence Clark  
In memory of Lyman Clark

From: Sterling House Staff  
In honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of  
Mary and Vincent Hardy

From: Elden and Rosamond Dustin  
In memory of Donald Fowler

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Computerizing the collection of the Society has become a necessary and logical step as a result of our enlarged storage area and re-locating of the many items in the collection. Do you know of anyone who would like to donate a used computer for our use? It does not have to be state-of-the-art, just able to organize our inventory, mailing lists, newsletters, etc. If you know of any way to help in our search please call Vincent Hardy at 375-4230 or Carol Lovell at 375-3569.