
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

A Hand on the PAST >> An Eye to the FUTURE

Volume 1 Issue 2

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Man is a history-making creature who can neither repeat his past nor leave it behind. - W.H. Auden

Coming Event....
Keep your calendar open for our April 5, 1997, Antique Show!

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, November 22, 1996-8:00 pm

**Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street Stratford**

Storytelling

It's Not Just Fairy Tales Anymore

Lot Therrio: Minister, Therapist and Storyteller

'Once upon a time' are words every child knows as the signal for a story. Storytelling is always a shared experience, and shared experiences are the basis of all relationships. Storytelling is how we tell each other who we are, and how we share our beliefs.



Storyteller Lot Therrio tells a story of being sixteen and growing up in Louisiana and remembering words his Grandma Ruth sent him home with after each visit. "Now you be careful, boy, you be careful." Another story might be an Indian tale about the origin of the stars. Lot sometimes involves his audience as a chorus to sing "I'll love you forever, I'll love you for always, as long as I'm living, my baby you'll be," during parts of a story about a mother and son. As the child grows from baby to man, the mother keeps picking him up no matter how big, it ends with the man having to pick his mother up in his arms as she becomes old and feeble, and singing to her.

Mr. Therrio's stories show just how far contemporary storytelling has come from the fairy tales and children's hours that most people associate with the term. "It's a form of

intimacy that used to occur many years ago," he said, "as the world grows increasingly technological people seek ways to regain that sense of relationship to others. Perhaps this is the reason for the renewed popularity of storytelling."

The meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served.

Early American Festival

About 300 people attended the Historical Society's Early American Festival. The late September weather was perfect for the festivities. Several crafts people dressed in traditional attire demonstrated as adults and children gathered to watch.

One of the main attractions was the Sheldon's Horse Second Continental Light Dragoons, one of the most active living history groups in the state. This group was originally commissioned in 1776 under the command of state resident Elijah Sheldon. Most of the men in the original unit were from Connecticut, they played important roles in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. This Cavalry unit, which was the first of its kind commissioned in the United States, was later stationed in Fairfield where it battled the British and protected the local citizens.

The unit was "re-commissioned" in 1979 at the request of the late Colonel Frederick P. Todd of West Point. Its new purpose was not to fight the British but to combat ignorance. According to Sal Tarantino, Commander of re-enactment, "Our purpose is to get out to the public and show history." They do demonstrations at schools on request and can be called upon by order of the governor. In fact, Governor Rowland called for the Dragoons to be in Hartford prior to the recent presidential debate.

Many thanks to Society members Sandy Rutkowski and Cindy Kleynowski for devoting many hours planning and organizing the Festival. As one woman said "It's really nice to come out here and spend time with your family, there are a lot of interesting things to see."

Judson House Doorway

If you have not passed Judson House recently, do so, and take note of the completed restoration work on the doorway. The Society for preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) will issue a report on the paint analysis they are conducting on the Pediment, Doorway Surround, Door and East Gable to determine the chronological use of color on Judson House over time. This analysis is expected to be completed soon.

House Attendance

On October 30th Judson House and the Museum closed for this season and will reopen the middle of May 1997. Attendance has dropped considerably since 1993 when 387, not counting school groups, visited. A new brochure is being prepared and it is hoped its distribution will generate new interest. Do your part by visiting and encouraging your friends and family to learn more about Judson House.

Special Guests From Canada

On Thursday, October 24th, a group of students and adults from Ontario, Canada had a special tour through Judson House and the Museum accompanied by Stratford Town Manager Mark Barnhart. Docent Sandy Rutkowski, dressed in period costume, conducted the tour and answered all their inquiries.

A man builds a fine house: and now he has a master, and a task for life: he is to furnish, watch, and keep in repair, the rest of his days. -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Membership-Extra Gifts

The Society is most grateful for the many extra gifts received during the annual membership drive. This additional support is very important and appreciated. If you have mailed your 1997 dues, thank you, if not please do so promptly. Additional envelopes are available at the office or call 378-0630.

Roof Slates

The Stratford Town Hall has recently undergone an exterior renovation. One hundred slates removed from the roof have been donated to the Society. A number of options for the use of these slates is being considered such as stenciling, etc. The finished product may be sold at the next Antique Show. If you have a suggestion please call us.

Weaving

Volunteers are still needed in the weaving program. Please notify Dolores Hctor if you are interested. She can be reached by leaving a message on the office answering machine (378-0630).

Coming Programs

Jan. 31-William Niedeshiem, "Touches of Tiffany"

Mar. 21-Mary Witkowski, "Our Women Don't Sit Still"

May 23-To be announced

Mrs. Jean Wilcoxson

The Society has honored Mrs. Jean Wilcoxson with Life Membership. A longtime member of the Society, Mrs. Wilcoxson has served as Head Docent at Judson House. We extend our thoughts and prayers to Jean, who suffered a fall last Spring, as she becomes a permanent resident at the Masonic Home in Wallingford. Get Well and Holiday greetings will reach her at: Masonic Home, Ramage 6 Rm 603, Wallingford, CT, 06492

Mr. Joseph Fry

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fry are leaving Stratford for residence in Baltimore. Mr. Fry served as Building Maintenance Chairman overseeing the recent painting of Judson House and his participation in the Society will be greatly missed.

President Petriel

I wish to thank the membership for entrusting me with the leadership of the Society. The advancement and carrying out of its mission and activities will be my prime concern.

Thanksgiving is only a few days away. In New England a day set aside for thanks giving is our oldest holiday. As you and your family celebrate, give a thought to the early settlers who made our town possible.

Louis J. Petriel, President

Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind.

- Nathaniel Hawthorne

WARNING! This story contains pumpkin jokes.

Q: What vegetable does a pumpkin turn into when an elephant sits on it?

A: Squash.

It is generally accepted by most experts that today's pumpkins are special squashes, all members of the gourd family, along with cucumbers, cantaloupes and watermelons. It is also generally accepted that they originated in the New World, where pumpkins and other varieties of squash were selectively bred by Indians to produce better taste and more fruit. This may have occurred as long ago as 5000 B.C.

A particular strain of *C. pepo*, one often used for pumpkin pies, is what most of us would certainly call a pumpkin—orange, round, lovable. But other strains of the same species turn out to be what are called acorn squash and zucchini.

Q: What did the pumpkin say to his girlfriend?

A: "I seed you with another guy."

Do people still make pumpkin pies? The first published pumpkin pie recipe, dating back to 1796, was printed in *American Cookery*, the first "American" cookbook. It's author, Amelia Simmons, specified "one quart pompkin stewed and strained, 3 pints cream, 9 beaten eggs, sugar, mace, nutmeg and ginger, laid into paste, with a dough spur, cross and chequer it, and baked in dishes three quarters of an hour."

It's time for a closing joke.

Q: What does a pumpkin pie say after a big meal?

A: "That was filling."

SMITHSONIAN magazine - 10/96

Thanksgiving.....
Was founded by the Puritans to give thanks for being preserved from the Indians, and we keep it to give thanks that we are preserved from the puritans.

Findley Peter Dunne

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