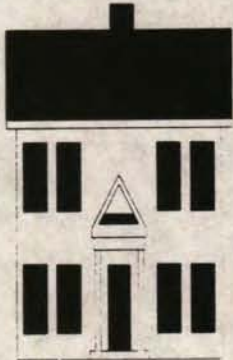

Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume 1 Issue 4

March
January 1997



*If the first women
God ever made was
strong enough to
turn the world upside
down all alone, these
together ought to be
able to turn it back
and get it right side
up again.*

*Sojourner Truth,
speech at Women's
Rights Convention
(1851)*

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

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, March 21, 1997-8:00 pm

Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street, Stratford

"Our Women Don't Sit Still"

Mary Witkowski

A Brief History Of Bridgeport Women

Ms Witkowski's program will cover 35 women who have made a difference in the History of the City of Bridgeport. Some of the women highlighted are Vida McLevy, wife of Jasper McLevy who served as Mayor of the City of Bridgeport from 1933 to 1957; Nancy Fish Barnum, second wife of Phineas T. Barnum the great American showman and founder of the Barnum and Bailey Circus; Geraldine Johnson, former Superintendent of the Bridgeport School System and Catherine Moore a Fairweather Lighthouse Keeper.

Ms Witkowski moved from Michigan in 1987 to accept her current position as Head of the Historical Collections at the Bridgeport Public Library. She has a Master's Degree in Library Science from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan and an Undergraduate Degree in Geography from Wayne University in Detroit, Michigan.

Her busy schedule also includes writing an historical column in the Bridgeport News called "From the Historical Collections", and is currently involved with a group starting a Bridgeport Historical Society. She now resides in Bridgeport.

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

Mrs. Bette Johnson, Program Chairman and Guide at Judson House has been hospitalized and is now at Mediplex , 245 Orange Ave, Milford, CT 06460 if you care to send a card or cheerful greeting.

Antique Show April 5th

Donations Still Welcome! Call the museum at 378-0630 for information or pickup of any donation that you have. Since this is our major fund-raiser of the year, we gratefully appreciate any and all contributions into this worthwhile project. We accept post cards, kitchen items, baskets, old boxes, bottles, crocks, glassware, china, silver, brass or copper items, old jewelry, book of all kinds.etc. etc. etc. Thank you for your enthusiasm and support.

Volunteer Profile

About 30 years ago Mrs. Joyce Bradbury started looking for the "Grandmother Indian" her husband's family talked about. She never found her. However, she was able to trace the Bradbury line back to their beginnings in this country.

This prompted a desire for Joyce to look into the background of her own family, and with the help of her aunt, was able to trace her ancestors and give that information to her son and her nieces and nephews. In her words "I was then and I am now hooked on genealogy."

The gift of a Life Membership to the Stratford Historical Society sometime in the 1970's was the beginning for Joyce. She took her turn being hostess at Judson House, helped at the Antique Shows and became corresponding secretary for a number of years.

About 1984, long time Historical Society librarian, Lillian Larson, asked Joyce to help with genealogy requests that regularly come to the Society. About 100 of these requests are received each year. Some require two to three weeks to research.

Joyce started working in the library with Ruth Barrows, another long time volunteer. A part time venture, they thought, but it didn't turn out that way. The rest is history. Joyce can still be found most Tuesdays and Thursdays browsing through files and books with her capable assistant Connie Boynton.

Genealogical research is precise and painstaking. If you have an interest in this field come and talk to Joyce

some morning in the office.

Since the Stratford Historical Society first organized in 1925 many dedicated volunteers have spent numerous hours in various ways and we would like to acknowledge them in this Newsletter from time to time.

For Sale

A set of four (4) armetale/pewter plates is for sale for \$150.00 They depict Stratford landmarks: the first, is the Captain David Judson House ca. 1723; the second, Stratford Depot ca. 1850; the third, Putney Chapel ca. 1844, and lastly, the Stratford Lighthouse ca. 1882.

You can see similar plates at the office on Tuesday or Thursday between 9:00 am to 2:00pm.

Call Winnie Nettleton at 375-9409 if you are interested.

Hostesses

Mrs. Betty Applegate is arranging her schedule of hosts/hostesses for the coming season. Judson House and and Museum will open the middle of May and if you care to volunteer to greet guests any Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday from May through October, please call Mrs Applegate at 377-4224 or call the Society Office and leave a message 378-0630.

Bequest

The Society has received a bequest of \$3700.00 from the estate of Mrs. Alma Fowler. Mrs. Fowler was a very active member of the Society for many years.

*There is no king
who has not had a
slave among his
ancestors, and no
slave who has not
had a king among
his.*

*Helen Keller
(The Story of My
Life)*

Stratford Landmark

The Stratford Library was organized in 1885, and moved into its original building in 1896.

The property and building were a gift to the people in the town from Stratford native Birdseye Blakeman. At that time he was the president of the American Book Co. and an associate of Blakeman, Iverson and Taylor of New York, a school book firm.

The building and trust were designated to be run by a group formed in 1885 called the Stratford Library Association. This association, now governed by a Board of Trustees, is a private non-profit corporation. The Board receives an annual budget from the Town of Stratford for the provision of free public library service.

In 1954 an addition was added to the original structure. As the town grew, so did the library collection. The addition soon became inadequate to house the needs of the growing town.

In the mid 1970's, a search for a new building began. Great sentiment prevailed over maintaining the original old structure. After much searching and deliberation, the architectural firm of Galliher, Schoenhardt and Baier was chosen to design a new building blending the old with the new.

The library is open six days a week and has a collection of well over 100,000 volumes in addition to being a member of Bibliomation, a computerized library link service in Connecticut.

The library is an integral part of the Town used by residents of all ages for reference and enjoyment.

Paint Analysis

A preliminary report has been received from the Society of Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), on the chronological use of color on the Judson House. This report is based on a one day site visit made last August.

The weathering of the wood suggests that the house was originally unpainted. Paint samples suggest that red was the original paint color followed by yellow and then white sometime during the Victorian Era.

During the 18th Century part of the doorway surround was green. It was expensive and it degraded readily. That we find green used, even sparingly, on an exterior is a comment on the high social position of the owner. It is extremely likely that the dark layer we consistently find above it was an oil varnish which acted to protect the green. Such a coating would have imparted a very high gloss and would have primarily extended the life of the paint.

So as you can see, we have come full circle by going back to the early paint color of red with white trim.

Patriot Weekend

May 3rd & 4th...Eisenhower Park in Milford.

This will feature a re-enactment of a Revolutionary War battle, crafts, an 18th century version of a shopping mall, campsite, Cavalry demonstrations. Come back in time with the Sheldon's Horse Second Continental Light Dragoons.

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends: they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.

*Charles W. Eliot
(The Durable
Satisfactions of
Life.)*

Coming Events:

Membership meeting March 21, 1997
Mary Witkowski - "Our Women Don't Sit Still"



Bring a Friend

36th Annual Antique Show and Sale. - April 5, 1997

Membership meeting May 23, 1997
Lewis G. Knapp, Town Historian - "Age of the Flying Boats"

Early American Festival - Saturday, September 27, 1997
Crafts, workshops by artisans, refreshments.

Pewter Plate for Sale

Single Pewter Plate of the Judson House, #116, is for sale from the Society for \$40.00. Please call the Society at 378-0630, if you wish to purchase this plate.

ANTIQUÉ SHOW

*BALDWIN
CENTER*

APRIL 5, 1997

Please Come!

Stratford Historical Society

(203) 378-0630

967 Academy Hill
P.O.Box 382
Stratford, CT 06497

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
City, ST
Permit No. XXXX
