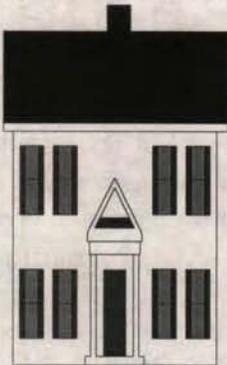

Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume II Issue II

November 1997



When people hear good music, it makes them homesick for something they never had, and never will have.

Edgar Watson Howe

Coming Event...
Keep Dec. 7th open for Judson House Early American Christmas.
See page 3 for more details.

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, November 28, 1997-8:00 pm

**Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street Stratford**

Colonial-Era Music Strains of the Irish Harp and the Penny Whistle Moira Kelly

While growing up with her Irish parents and eleven brothers and sisters, Moira Kelly was surrounded by singing. She recalls "Everyone sang all of the time, individually and together."

At an early age she informed her father of a desire to play the harp. As a guitar was the only instrument available in this large family, this was the first instrument she learned to play.

She inherited her Mother's creativity and became interested in the Colonial Era after a visit to Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts while still very young. The customs, costumes, crafts and music made a lasting impression.

As an adult, Ms. Kelly attended Sacred Heart University and was able to take harp instruction through an exchange program at the University of Bridgeport, later continuing the study of this instrument at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. Six years after graduation, she moved to St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest permanent city in the United States. While there, she took part in the festival "Grand Illuminations" which takes place during June and December. As Town Musician, she performed on historic St. George Street in the Old City.

Since 1989, Ms. Kelly has resided in Fairfield with her three sons. She performs regularly and continues to teach the harp while teaching full-time at the Land Mark Academy. Recently, from August through October, she performed weekends at Ogden House in Fairfield.

Ms. Kelly will accompany herself on the harp as she presents her musical program of Irish and Scottish Ballads of the 1700's.

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

A Message from the Vice-President

While working with Fairfield County Historical Societies and with Coastal Fairfield Tourism I hear many compliments on Stratford Historical Society's volunteer participation. Our expanded newsletter with "lots of news" is spreading the word.

The enthusiastic volunteer turnout for the Antique Show, History Camp, Early American Festival and membership meetings are just the most visible examples. Volunteers help visitors from around the country to appreciate Judson House and to learn their family history.

The house and museum are closed for the season, but our volunteer activities continue. We are organizing hundreds of books, some very unusual, already donated for the next Antique Show to be held on April 18, 1998. We plan to expand our permanent exhibits with a major new custom built display case. We hope to paint the museum interior. We are developing new exhibits and updating our collections.

Stop in the office to volunteer or to visit and see some of these projects.

John Calhoun

New Volunteers

The Historical Society would like to welcome two new volunteers. Mrs. Gloria Duggan, who will be working on genealogical research, and Mrs. Elaine Gavoli, who will be assisting with publicity. Welcome to the "Cellar Crew" our office volunteers.

Early American Festival

On September 27th visitors to the Early American Festival on Academy Hill at the Capt. David Judson House were in the 18th Century. As the gentle chords of Ray Holland's dulcimer filled the air, groups of people dressed in 18th century dress passed about. Everywhere skills and lost arts were being demonstrated by authentic craftspeople, there was a basket maker, blacksmith, fly fisherman, lace maker leather worker, milliner, potter, quilter, spinner and sutler. Peter Blekis, a professional wood turner and chair maker, demonstrated the operation of a six-foot lathe used to turn wood for chair legs. From noon to 3 pm New England Attic Treasures of Stratford appraised antiques, and Eagle Scouts who have studied authentic dance performed near a tepee and campsite to reflect Native American culture. In an educational tent young people were able to write with quill pens and bottled ink and were shown how to play games children played in the 1700's.

The event was co-chaired by Sandy Rutkowski and Cindy Kleynowski to educate the public about local history and to bring an appreciation of the intellect and creativity of the early craftsman. "We keep it authentic," said Sandy. The Junior Historical Society members, who range in age from 5 to 12, were also very helpful in conducting tours of the Judson House. Through their training they explained what was expected of children in the 1700's. Miss Marge Jacaruso, publicity chairman and treasurer of the Society stated, "We would like the townspeople to get involved, we are interested in promoting Stratford and its history, I think the festival brought a lot of attention to the town."

Down in their hearts, wise men know this truth: The only way to help yourself is to help others.

Elbert Hubbard

Historic Street Signs

The first of 32 newly designed street signs have been installed in the Academy Hill Historic District. The signs are of a light colonial burgundy with a reflective background and a logo representing the Judson House.

The project to design a unique street sign for the historic district began last year when students from Center and St. James schools, located in the district, were invited to submit ideas. Members of the Planning, Historic District and Arts commissions took the ideas submitted and made the final decision on the design.

The new street sign is designed to accent the character of the historic neighborhood, and depending on public reaction, this project could be expanded to other neighborhoods in town.

The first signs were installed at a ceremony on September 22nd in front of the Judson House.

Also on Academy Hill is a new Historic District plaque dedicated in the Spring which reads as follows:

Academy Hill Historic District
Established April 14, 1988

First known as Watch House Hill where the first settlers manned a Blockhouse and a Palisade to guard the Town from threats from Dutch and Indian attack. Renamed Meeting House Hill when the Townsmen built a new meeting house on its southeast corner in 1680, and called Academy Hill since the Stratford Academy opened here in 1805. This common has been a gathering place for Stratford people for over 350 years.

Book of Rememberance

The following contributions have been made in memory of Mr. Donald Calkins by: Mr. & Mrs. Hiram Tindall

Mrs. Betty Sanders

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kurmay

Mrs. John Ross

Mrs. Margaret VanGieson Calkins

Duck Decoy Case

The Society has fine examples of Duck Decoys by local carvers including works by Charles E. "Shang" Wheeler and Ben Holmes. We are in need of a new built-in case to exhibit these decoys and have received a contractors bid of \$2500. This could be an excellent opportunity for one of our members to honor the memory of family or friend by sponsoring this project. A commemorative plaque will be placed on the case.

Christmas Fair

*Lillian Larson
longtime library
chairman is now
residing at:
Michaelsen
HealthCenter
831 N. Batavia.,
Batavia, IL
60510.
She would
appreciate
holiday greetings
from her friends.*

ITEMS FOR SALE:

SWEATSHIRTS

We have a limited number of sweatshirts for sale. They are white of cotton blend with a replica of Judson House, in color, on the front. The shirts are available in adult sizes Medium, Large and Extra Large. The cost is \$20.00 to members, \$25.00 to non-members. If you would like to have one mailed, they will be sent Priority Mail at an additional cost of \$3.00.

WILCOXSON'S "TOWN OF STRATFORD"

We have four volumes available in various condition as follows:
Perfect-\$100. Good-\$75. Good-\$65. Fair-\$35.

ORCUTT'S "HISTORY OF STRATFORD & BRIDGEPORT-1639-1886"

two sets available at \$100.00 each set.

KNAPP'S "IN PURSUIT OF PARADISE" AND COMPANION COOKBOOK \$30.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS.....

On Thanksgiving Day all over America, families sit down to dinner at the same moment-halftime.

—UNKNOWN

Stratford Historical Society

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Stratford, CT 06497**

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