
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume IV Issue 3

January 2000



*Capt. David Judson House c1750
Catharine B Mitchell Museum*

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday January 28, 2000 - 7:30pm

Christ Episcopal Church

2000 Main Street, Stratford

Choosing the Proper Tool for Community Planning A Crystal Ball or A Stereoscope?

David Killeen, Stratford Town Planner

Mr. Killeen will provide a PowerPoint/computer presentation on the importance of historic preservation in community planning, with a focus on Stratford. His belief is that communities must first understand where they have been before they can make their best decisions about where they are going. Too often, community leaders across the country have opted for development plans that have seriously changed the very face and character of the towns and cities for which they have been planned. In addition to pressures by the development community, there is often a general lack of public appreciation for those elements of the streetscape which are most important in defining a community's character.

Mr. Killeen believes that, especially in New England, the richness of the architecture and the landscape of a town should often be the primary elements of any plans for development and revitalization of that town. Historic properties frequently become landmarks remembered by most people when they think about the community around them. They are defining elements that provide a sense of familiarity and identity. Many communities have used their historic character to form their public image, to attract new residents and businesses, and to promote tourism. Stratford is no different. Its rich history is generally evident in its physical appearance-and, yet, there are parts of Stratford which define it more as a community of the 1960's than one dating back to 1639.

Does progress have to involve a wrecking ball or can it be a process which recognizes and embellishes on a community's most unique physical assets? Everyday, there are new threats to the essential character of Stratford. And, it is up to local citizens and their public officials to protect this heritage-for the enjoyment of future generations, certainly, but also for the retention of the rich features that virtually define Stratford.

Mr. Killeen will discuss tools currently being used in the town to protect community character, list other strategies which could be helpful in protecting the town's character, and suggest ways in which Historical Society members can get involved.

Dave Killeen has been the Town Planner for Stratford since 1987 and has been responsible for assisting the Town in its long-range planning efforts. Prior to arriving in Stratford, he was employed as Executive Director of Bridgeport Neighborhood Housing Service, whose purpose is to foster the revitalization of declining urban neighborhoods. He has been the Director of Planning Agencies in Nashua, NH and St. Louis, MO.

In 1975, Dave received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning from UMASS/Amhurst. In 1995, he was listed in the 25th Anniversary Edition of Marquis' Who's Who in the East.

***Please Note:
The Meeting
is open to the
public and
refreshments
will be served.***

Vice President Todd Lovell

Plans for the new year are being formulated including educational activities which will also act as fund raisers for the Society. There will be participation by the Society on Stratford Day with a booth on Main Street and Tag Sale on our grounds. The Early American Festival (our yearly event), the Summer History Camp for school children from fourth grade and up and our Annual Christmas Festival are even now being planned by Education Chairmen Sandy Rutkowski and Diane Matthews. These activities will depend upon Society member volunteers. Please respond positively if you are contacted and plan to participate in these fun events for all ages.

The Gift Shop is closed until May, but you can still shop on Tuesday & Thursday when the office is open.

We need your help to make this a successful year.

Spring Tag Sale

Last Spring the 38th and last Antique Show was held at Christ Church Hall. As attics and basements of our members are now bare of items from the past that might be considered antiques, we have decided to change the format and hold a Giant Tag Sale. The sale will be held on the grounds of Judson House in conjunction with the June Stratford Day festivities. We are in need of your contributions, as before, of items such as; glassware, china, small furniture, jewelry, pictures, frames, baskets, kitchenware, etc.

We will be happy to pick up your items if you will call 378-0630, or they can be left at the office any Tuesday or Thursday from 9:00 to 2:00

Judson House Visitors

During the 1999 season Docents welcomed visitors from Stratford as well as 18 States and 25 Connecticut towns.

Connecticut

Ansonia 1
Bridgeport 7
Cheshire 1
Danbury 1
Danford 2
Darien 2
Fairfield 2
Greenwich 3
Milford 9
Monroe 1
New Milford 2
North Branford 3
Oakville 1
Oxford 2
Plainville 1
Richfield 2
Seymour 3
Shelton 7
Southbury 2
Southington 1
Trumbull 3
Wallingford 1
Waterbury 1
Westport 1
Winsted 2

United States

California 6
Florida 4
Georgia 1
Illinois 1
Kansas 2
Maine 1
Maryland 1
Massachusetts 2
New Jersey 2
New York 1
North Carolina 4
Pennsylvania 1
Puerto Rico 1
Tennessee 1
Texas 2
Virginia 2
Washington St 2
Wisconsin 3

100 visitors on
Stratford Day

200 visitors at
Fall Festival

We appreciate the docents who conducted the tours throughout the season and Betty Applegate, Chairman of the many Hosts and Hostesses who were there to greet the guests.

THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL STATISTICAL & INDUSTRIAL (1884)

In 1687, roads leading from one plantation to another were first designated as King's highways or country roads. The first road of this character in the county was laid out from Stratford over Golden Hill at Pequonnock, for horses and carts, which afterwards became a section of the regular stageroad and post-route through the county from New York to Boston.

*What is there more kindly
than the feeling
between host and
guest.*

Aeschylus



A Part of the Past - The Outhouse



A Stratford Beauty

According to Town Historian Lewis Knapp's research plumbing came to Stratford between 1899 and 1901 when the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company laid water mains from its 205 million gallon reservoir at Beaver Dam. But the long unused little shed in backyards are still of interest to many historians as they may indicate the age of a house.

Often not visible from the street an Outhouse could be of varied construction. Some were simple sentry type structures, others larger with two or three holes to accommodate all members of a family. One very well-kept facility still standing in Stratford has plastered interior walls. Some served double duty being large enough to serve as toolsheds.

Mrs. Virginia Williams, a Rhode Island historian, is a retired elementary school teacher and self-described "Queen of Outhouses." She has become an expert on the topic, which provides her with a fine collection of stories and photos. She knows more than seventy names for the building such as "Easer" "Auntie" "Depository" "Vault" and "Castle."

The shape and details of outhouses say much about who built them and when. Those with slanted roofs were mainly built in the 1930's during work projects started by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Two-story outhouses were built in snowy areas so people didn't have to shovel out the lower level in winter. In New England many were attached to barns to shorten the trip during bad weather. Wealthy families generally crafted houses with holes of varying sizes to accommodate different body sizes and built separate outhouse holes for servants. Some even had removable seats to cope with cold weather, they could be lifted and stored by a wood-burning stove. In farming areas outhouses were mounted on wheels and dragged from field to field at harvest time.

Cutouts in the door directed men and women to separate facilities according to Mrs. Williams, and ventilated the building. The half-moon was for women and the star for men. Many more half-moons than stars can be found because in some areas of the South and New England it was considered 'unmanly' to use an outhouse.

Outhouse doors almost always swing in. A door swinging out could be the cause of great embarrassment.

Some years ago, a friend of Lew and Vivienne Knapp recalled when she was a little girl living in the Thomas Wells house on Elm Street (c. 1752). A bathroom of sorts had been installed under the leanto and her mother wanted an update so she called Lovell's Hardware, at the time the foremost plumbing and heating contractor in town. Mr. Harold Lovell estimated it would take about three weeks to complete the new facility so he would build a temporary outhouse in the back lot, which he did. The little lady remembers wearing slicker and boots and carrying her father's big black umbrella on rainy days when sent to the outhouse. It seems Mr. Lovell had omitted the roof saying that for three weeks a roof would be a waste.

Historic preservation is now looking beyond the mansion and becoming appreciative of all of the ancillary buildings as well.



This one has plastered walls

Yes, It Happened in This Century

I am sorry to say that there is too much point to the wisecrack that life is extinct on other planets because their scientists were more advanced than ours.

*John F. Kennedy
(1959 speech)*



*Happy the man, and
happy he alone.
He, who can call today
his own;
He who, secure within,
can say:
"Tomorrow do thy worst,
for I have lived
today."*

John Dryden

- Jan 15, 1919 Great Molasses Spill in Boston. Tank with 2,300,000 gal. broke causing a 30-foot wave of sticky goo in the city streets, people were carried off like driftwood.
- Apr 25, 1935 First Round-the-World phone call, by AT&T's W.S. Gifford 23,000 miles.
- May 14, 1918 Post Office prints upside down Jenny on air mail stamp. (1982-\$198,000.)
- May 18, 1910. With seconds to spare, a posse prevents human sacrifice to Halley's Comet.
- June 2, 1944 Planners of D-Day in panic when code word "Overlord" for the invasions operations appeared in a crossword puzzle. Only 5 weeks before "Utah, Omaha, Mulberry & Neptune" appeared in that same crossword puzzle column.
- July 14, 1965 Mariner 4 flies by Mars and finds no canals. This puts an end to the suggestion by Astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli of the "canali" in 1877.
- July 17, 1934 Gov. Bill Langer (Rep.) of North Dakota issues a states "Declaration of Independence" from the United States, to avoid a conspiracy to defraud.
- July 18, 1938 Douglas Corrigan earns name "Wrong Way" by landing in Ireland instead of California.
- July 20, 1969 At 10:56pm EDT man takes his first walk on the moon.
- July 21, 1925 John Scopes is fined \$100 for teaching the theory of evolution.
- Aug 4, 1943 James Wright of GE trying to develop a rubber substitute invents silly putty.
- Aug 10, 1927 Gulzon Borglum begins his Mount Rushmore Sculpture.
- Aug 18, 1920 Women get vote on second try after Harry Burns mother convinces him "my vote will never hurt you". He changed his vote and the 19th Amendment passes.
- Aug 19, 1909 Indianapolis Speedway opens with a disastrous 300 mile race, dust from the roadway blinding the drivers causing death of 5 people. (Brick resurfaced in 1911.)
- Sep 13, 1961 Yes, there was an "Uncle Sam", in fact 2 of them, and both named Samuel Wilson! One from Troy, NY born 1766, sold beef, stamped barrels "EA-US". He was referred to as Uncle Sam Wilson. The 2nd Sam Wilson born 1778 in DE also moved to Troy, and clerked at a general store and was referred to as 'Uncle Sam', once again supplies were marked "EA-US". Whichever one is correct the name spread like wildfire.
- Sept 17, 1908 First fatal air crash kills Orville Wright's passenger.
- Sep 20, 1919 Women trolley conductors fired as the men return from W.W.I.
- Sep 20, 1956 One year before Sputnik, Vernher Von Braun was denied permission to launch orbital missile by the budget makers of Washington. Oh, Well.
- Sep 26, 1933 Machine Gun Kelly coins the term G-men, "Don't shoot G-Men."
- Oct 2, 1919 Woodrow Wilson has a massive stroke, his wife becomes, in effect, acting president.
- Oct 14, 1912 With a 'thick' speech in his breast pocket Teddy Roosevelt foils a would-be assassin.
- Oct 22, 1919 Nan Britton claims future Pres. Warren Harding fathered her child.
- Oct 22, 1921 Four soldiers bodies exhumed in France, one to become the "Unknown Soldier."
- Oct 23, 1918 Influenza kills 851 people in New York City. In 1 week 21,000 died in USA.
- Oct 28, 1914 The first true zipper, "Hookless No. 2". The name Zipper was first used by the B.F. Goodrich Co. on its goulashes.
- Nov 2, 1920 Federal prisoner Eugene Debs (serving a 10-year sentence) receives almost a million votes for president.
- Nov 11, 1918 W.W.I ends the 2nd time officially. (11/8/1918 it ended the 1st time.)
- Nov 15, 1902 Sportsman Theodore Roosevelt brings into being the "Teddy Bear."
- Dec 3, 1941 "Pearl Harbor will never be attacked from the air" Adm. Charles McMorris.
- Dec 5, 1933 Prohibition ends. Buiochas le Dia! (Thanks be to God).

STRATFORD NEWS**October 16, 1914****Mr. & Mrs. Wells Entertain**

Monday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Wells of Putney, a coon supper was enjoyed by their many friends. Piano and vocal selections were enjoyed during the evening. The coon weighed 16 pounds and was captured by John Wells and George Bartlett last Saturday.

Rarely do we come across Raccoons today, except those that have met their end on the Highways. How do you prepare and cook a Raccoon? We found out in the "Old Fashioned Recipe Book," a five pound six hundred page one volume encyclopaedia of food do-it-yourselfing, even how to butcher every animal wild or tame, and how to make soap, candles and tan hides too.

Clean and skin. Remove kernels behind legs (Squirrel, Possum and Coon have "kernels," situated around the neck and under the forelegs). Soak quite a few hours in salt water or overnight. Coon is good barbecued but it can also be browned off after being cut up and then baked. Just be sure and use a young animal. Use a base barbecue sauce as for pork ribs. Baste your meat every hour. Do this until meat is tender-four to six hours.

The Author states the only kind of animal her Daddy would never hunt is the Porcupine. He said that was the only meat a man lost in the forest without a gun had a chance of catching because it was so slow moving.

If the above recipe is not to your taste try Raccoon Potpie, Raccoon Stew, Stuffed Baked Raccoon or Raccoon Patties, recipes from the Internet.

www.fishersnet.com

STRATFORD NEWS**December 30, 1964**

There may not seem to be anything special about three 25 cent pieces. There certainly seems to be no reason for hanging them on display in a retail store window. But the three quarters in the front window of Lovell's Hardware Store were there this week for a special reason.

Someone had sent the Lovells 75 cents to pay for items pilfered during the Christmas rush.

The unsigned letter accompanying the money told the Lovells that the coins were to pay for items "taken from your store."

Struck with an apparent change of heart shown by the belated "payment," H. C. Lovell, Sr. added a comment of his own beneath the letter and the attached coins. "Someone's been going to church," it said simply.

Book of Remembrance

The following contributions have been made in memory of:

H. James Wilson

Given by: Richard & Marie Blake,
Gloria Duggan, Margaret Jacaruso,
Catherine Lawrence, Catherine T. Moore

Margaret Van Giesen Calkins

Given by: Richard & Marie Blake,
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Bradbury,
Constance Boynton, B.J. Calkins,
Bonnie, Dean & Whitney Paradise,
Carlton & Selma Clark,
Connie & Hiram Tindall,

Esther S. Wojtul

Nancy S. Calkins

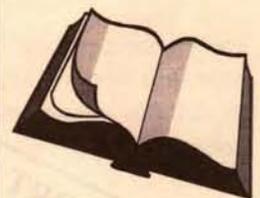
Given by B. J. Calkins

Donald W. Calkins

Given by B. J. Calkins

*The robb'd that smiles
steals something
from the thief.*

*Shakespeare,
Othello*



11 LOST DAYS IN 1752

*The melancholy days
are come, the saddest of
the year.*

*Of wailing winds,
and naked woods, and
meadows brown and
sere.*

*William Cullen Bryant
"Death of the Flowers"*

In 1752, a shift was made from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. Under the old calendar, the new year began 25 March. Therefore, if John wrote his will 17 March 1748 and then entered it for probate on 2 May 1749, it was only a month and a half later. This fact could make a difference if you were writing the life story of John.

In order to shift from the old to the new calendar, it was decided that a "tuck" would be taken in the year. Eleven days, 3 through 13 September 1752, were dropped. So that you went to bed on 2 September and woke up on 14 September. This shift caused George Washington, who was born 11 February 1731-32, to convert his birthdate to 22 February 1732. So if you have an ancestor who died after 1752, and you want to know what his birthdate was Old Style, subtract 11 days from what his tombstone says.

Watch out when months are given in numbers and not names. Under the Old Style, March was the first month and September the seventh. Thus, if John died 11-31-1740, he died 31 January 1740. The Quakers love this system. Everything changed in 1752.

Connecticut Society of Genealogists
Newsletter-January/February 1998

Stratford Historical Society

(203) 378-0630

967 Academy Hill

P.O.Box 382

Stratford, CT 06615-0382

IMPORTANT:
This is your **LAST** issue if
an "X" appears over your
name. **YOUR DUES**
ARE IN ARREARS!!!

**REMEMBER: The Membership Meeting will begin at 7:30 pm
Bring a Friend.**