
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume IV Issue 4

March 2000



Capt. David Judson House c/1750
Catharine B Mitchell Museum

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday March 31, 2000 - 7:30pm

Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street, Stratford

Page Hedden Wilson "Wives of The White House" Companions in Love

In self-revealing scenes, the First Ladies shed new light on their contribution to history and the commonality and diversity of their lives.

Lovable, vivacious **Dolley Payne Madison** watches anxiously from a window of the White House as thousands flee Washington in the wake of British Troops. Dinner awaits the President in the State Dining room. Who will enjoy it? Dolley's beloved "Jemmy" or the hated British Admiral Cockburn? Hurriedly packing the heirlooms of a fledgling nation, Dolley reflects upon her years in a home about to be burned, leaving only the walls standing.

In self-imposed exile at her pensione in the French Pyrenees, a maligned, heart-broken but defiant **Mary Todd Lincoln** recalls the sorrows of a life that culminated in a public insanity hearing urged on the courts by her eldest and only surviving son, Robert.

After a last desperate and exhausting effort to win the nation's support for the League of Nations, President Woodrow Wilson suffers a paralyzing stroke. Spirited, courageous **Edith Bolling Wilson**, the President's devoted second wife and closest confidante, must decide if she can assume Presidential powers to give her husband the complete rest he must have if he is to recover. The press would label Edith "the Iron Queen," "First Woman President," "Acting First Man," but history proves otherwise.

Author and Actress Page Hedden Wilson's stage career includes two years of theatrical training in England with Directors of the Old Vic. In addition to drama studies at Antioch College, Gloucester School of the Theatre and the HB Studio in New York City, she has toured nationally and performed in summer stock. Ms Wilson has performed her one-woman plays in major cities throughout the United States and in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In all these portrayals, Page Wilson's talents are exhibited in elaborate detail with complete attention to historical accuracy.

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

I hope some day someone will take time to evaluate the true role of the wife of a President, and to assess the many burdens she has to bear and the contributions she makes.

*Harry S. Truman
(1884-1972)*

*Remember:
Giant Tag Sale
June 3, 2000*

President John Calhoun

The extreme cold earlier this winter struck our house as it did many others. Upstairs in Judson House a frozen pipe burst and poured water through the borning room ceiling. Luckily, the leak was discovered before much damage was done.

There has been much activity over the winter improving our facilities and preparing for the coming season. We have installed a new modern alarm system and new door guards to improve burglary and fire protection.

The SNET grant has helped us expand our computer capabilities. With a new computer and phone line we are now on the Internet. Two Stratford artifacts were purchased on eBay and added to our collection. SNET also donated a fax machine to the Society.

Sandy Rutkowski and Diane Matthews have organized our participation in Stratford Day and are preparing for the History Camp and Early American Festival.

Marie Kubic has created a fascinating new exhibit entitled "A Century of Ladies Hats." Hats from our collection, both beautiful and bizarre, show fads of the different periods. I look forward to seeing you all at some of these events.

Our publisher has sold out the first printing of "Images of America-Stratford" and has started a second printing. However, copies are still available at the Society office.

Spring Tag Sale

The Society has decided to depart from sponsoring the Annual Spring Antique Show after almost 40 years. On **June 3rd, Stratford Day**, along with numerous other local organizations we will have festivities on the grounds of Judson House. Junior Society members will participate, adult docents will give tours of Judson House and the gift shop will be open for visitors.

A **GIANT TAG SALE** will be our main attraction. We need your help. All items of salable quality will be accepted for this sale. Please contact the office for pickup (378-0630) or you may drop off any item Tuesday or Thursday from 9:00 to 2:00.

Society Receives Grant from SNET

The Stratford Historical Society was recently awarded a grant from SNET as part of an innovative corporate contribution program to preserve Connecticut's history through the use of technology.

The Society secured the funds through the "Museums for the Millenium" grant, an SNET "Links to Learning Program." SNET awarded grants of \$1,000 to 93 organizations in the state, including local historical societies, museums and other groups that preserve the social, technological and regional history of the state. The grants will allow these groups to get extra phone lines and an Internet hook-up, as well as design their own Web site home page.

The Connecticut League of History Organizations also received a grant to start up its own Web site home page which will eventually have links to all of its members.

The Stratford Historical Society plans to publicize a schedule of coming events, membership information, brief historical sketches of interest and items available for sale in the Gift Shop.

SNET's President and CEO, Forrest Miller, said, "Connecticut's heritage will be available at our finger tips, connecting people to their past as we move forward into a new century. These grants represent SNET's ongoing investment in the communities we serve and the quality of life in Connecticut."

We are pleased to hear from our membership at any time, comments or criticism can be helpful. You may e-mail us at the following:
JudsonHouseStfd@aol.com

HONOR ROLL

In May, 1943 an Honor Roll was placed on the North Parade Green of Town Hall, containing 3,337 names of Stratford men and women who served in various branches of the armed forces during World War II. This Honor Roll, of wood construction, was replaced after 20 years of exposure to wind and weather by a beautiful War Memorial, a gift to the Town by Paoline Cipolla of the Stratford Monument Works. It was dedicated on September 22, 1963 to the honor of all Stratford Residents who had served their Country.

*Behold, I do not give
lectures or a little
charity,
When I give I give
myself.*

*Walt Whitman,
Leaves of Grass*



MISS CORNELIA JUDSON**The Stratford News-Sept 22, 1939****Services Held for Miss Judson in Stratford**

"Funeral services for Miss Cornelia Judson of 820 East Broadway, were held at her home Tuesday. The Rev. F. Stanley Sellick, of the Stratford Congregational Church, officiated. Burial was in Union Cemetery.

Miss Judson died Sunday at her Stratford home at the age of 79. Had she lived, she would have found great interest in the Tercentenary celebration, for she was descended from one of the town's oldest families.

Miss Judson will long be remembered both here and in Japan, for it was she who founded the Matsuyama Night School in Matsuyama, Japan, where she worked for 45 years, retiring from active service in 1932.

Miss Judson was born in Stratford, and educated in its schools. She was graduated from the State Normal School in New Britain, Conn., in 1882 and for three years taught school until she entered Wellesley College for a special teachers' course. In 1887 she sailed for Japan under the American Board of Foreign Missions. Her first three years were in school work in Niigata. She was then transferred to Matsuyama Girls' School.

Seeing the pathetic condition of the children of the poor who were receiving no education, Miss Judson turned the lower part of her little house into school rooms. Here, with the help of a group of Japanese young men, she started a night school. This was the first organized philanthropic institution for the poor in Shaikoku, this little school grew to be a fine night school, training ambitious young men and women who were forced through economic necessity to work in the day time. Many of its graduates went on to higher study in normal schools, commercial schools, law colleges and the ministry.

In addition to the founding of the night school Miss Judson taught in other mission schools and did a great deal of evangelistic work in other sections of Japan. She spoke the language fluently.

Hundreds of Christian Japanese men and women today owe the molding of their characters to Miss Judson during her many years of service in the mission schools.

"Even as the rough bit of sand in the oyster shell has been made beautiful by the patient overlaying of pearl so has beauty in character been wrought out of the rough human material which has come to you during these years of work with and for the people of Matsuyama," said the Provincial Governor of the Island of Shaikoku as he presented Miss Judson with six pearls as a tribute to her from the people she has served."

Cornelia Judson was born on October 20, 1860, the daughter of Stiles and Caroline Judson in the homestead on Main Street near Paradise Green. Later the family moved to Homestead Avenue, then to the Judson House on Academy Hill.

For seven years Cornelia's father was a captain of a clipper ship in the trade with China. In 1849 he was one of the gold-seekers in California. He became a druggist and for the last twenty years of his life he was a general storekeeper in Stratford.

The family consisted of Stiles Judson, Jr., who became a lawyer, Alice, who was interested in foreign missions; Minnie, a teacher and Elizabeth, who died as a young girl.

The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions reported that unfortunately when Matsuyama was bombed in World War II the school was completely destroyed, but by using semi-permanent buildings, the school remained open during the difficult war years.

A letter dated March 20, 1946, received from the secretary of the American Board stated, "It is sad to think that all those buildings are gone, but I comfort myself with the thought that the real building that was done through the years was in the lives of the young people who attended those schools, and nothing can wipe that out. It will go on and on and their enthusiasm will rebuild what is necessary so that the many things they received may be passed on to the coming generations of young people, I have great faith to believe that such will be the case."

In 1947 the school was reorganized as the Jonan High School and continued to run as a school for poor wage earners.



The Burr-Hamilton Duel

At sunrise on July 11, 1804 two men faced off. One a Vice-President of the United States, the other a former Secretary of the U.S. Treasury. After the event, one was fatally hit, while the other's bullet lodged in a tree limb. What caused such learned men to resort to an old practice, now outlawed in the city of New York? And, what became of the "winner"?

Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton were friends who had served together in the Continental Congress, both had successful law practices and occasionally worked together on cases. Then both became involved in politics. Hamilton was a Federalist to the core, while Burr favored a loose coalition of the states. Burr had unseated Hamilton's father-in-law General Schuyler as Senator. Hamilton had challenged James Monroe to a duel and while the duel never took place, Monroe had named Burr as a second.

Another factor contributing was that when Burr was up for re-election, Hamilton had engineered his defeat. A duel between Burr and Hamilton's brother-in-law, John B. Church resulted in neither being hurt. As Hamilton was involved in Burr's losing the 1800 presidential election this only heightened the resentment between the two.

Then in 1804, Burr made a bid for governor of NY. Hamilton was quoted as claiming Burr "was a dangerous man," and unfit to govern. Burr called Hamilton to settle the matter. After many exchanges of letters, Burr forwarded his challenge.

The question remains to this day "did Hamilton hold his fire?" Hamilton deplored dueling, he admitted that he might have wronged Burr. He also wrote that he planned to hold his fire. His pistol's hair trigger was set (giving him a split-second advantage). But, was it accidentally fired or did he plan to miss, or was Burr's bullet impact what caused the gun to fire upward.

Hamilton's funeral on July 14 attracted thousands of angry mourners. Burr was bewildered at their reaction, as the duel had been conducted honorably and fairly. Hamilton was 47 at the time of his death.

Despite murder indictments in both New York and New Jersey, Burr managed to slip away to Pennsylvania. He eventually returned to Washington to finish out his term as Vice-President. He wanted to set up a domain in the West (now West Virginia) and enlisted a force of about 100 men. He stored food and ammunition. On August 1, 1806 he would embark on his western expedition "never to return". Burr was apprehended in 1807, brought to Richmond to be tried for treason, but the prosecution could not find witnesses to support the charges and he was acquitted. He wrote to France and England to fund his plans - but both turned him down.

In 1812 he returned to New York, his daughter sailed for New York to be as his side, but the ship was lost in a storm. Burr died in 1836 at the age of 80, his ego remained in tact to the end.

One other sidelight to the Burr Saga, his wife (whom he married in 1833) filed for divorce charging him with adultery. The divorce became final on September 14, 1836, the day he died.

Sources: "Strange Stories, Amazing Facts" and "Oh Say Can You See"



Aaron Burr

*Men regard it as their
right to return evil
for evil—and, if they
cannot, feel they
have lost their
liberty.*

Aristotle



Alexander Hamilton

JUNIOR SOCIETY NEWS

A new Year has begun and we have some events coming up that you may want to get involved in.

On June 3, 2000, Stratford Day will be taking place on Main St. and we plan on having a booth. On the grounds of Judson House there will be a GIANT TAG SALE which we hope will attract many visitors. There will also be crafters from our Early American Festival demonstrating their skills, adult guides will be giving tours of Judson House and the gift shop will be open. If you would like to take part and help us at our booth telling folks about the society, please let us know. We have costumes available for anyone who needs to borrow one. Some of the things you would be doing is greeting people, demonstrating weaving (we will show you how), passing out information about Judson House and demonstrating 18th Century games. It should be a fun day! Call Mrs. Rutkowski at 377-2158 to sign up.

Next, we have the Early American Festival on September 16th with a rain date of September 17th. We have many re-enactors portraying the 1700's and demonstrating skills of this era. We will again have our own junior society tent for us to work from. This is a great event for your whole family to come to and spend the day. We will be letting you know more about this in future newsletters.

The first project for us is to work together on is the herb garden on May 13, from 9:30 to 11:30. We need a lot of helping hands to keep our garden growing. This may be a good way to share some time with a family member or an adult friend who likes to garden. You may sign up to volunteer with an adult of your choice. On this day we will be reviewing weaving skills for the Stratford Day demonstration as well as making new signs for the herb garden. If you would like to take part or if you can't come to this workshop but would like to be in charge of the garden for one week, please call Mrs. Matthews at 378-8341.

During the week of July 10 to 14, we will be holding our summer history camp. Pass the word along because we fill up fast. That's all for now see you all soon.



March

Women's History Month

March being Women's History month we are pleased to bring attention to the following ladies.

Sarah Josepha Buell Hale (1778-1868), edited *Ladies Magazine*, one of the earliest magazines for women. It eventually merged with *Lady's Book* and became *Godey's Lady's Book*, which was one of the most widely read periodicals for two decades. In 1846 she began to lobby for Thanksgiving as a national holiday. For 17 years she wrote letters to the governors of every state and territory, that's how long it took to finally persuade a U.S. president to officially designate the fourth Thursday in November as an official day of thanks.

Lucy Webb Hayes (1831-1889) wife of the 19th president, Rutherford B. Hayes. Lucy was the first First Lady to have a college education (from Cincinnati Wesleyan) and according to some historians the first to be called the First Lady. She earned the nickname "Lemonade Lucy" because of her decision, along with her husband, to ban liquor from the White House. They feared America of 1877 was in danger of drowning in booze.

Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910) Inspired by a visit to a Union Army Camp during the Civil War, wrote the famous poem "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862, it immediately became popular as a song of the Civil War.

Jeanette Rankin (1880-1973) First woman member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1917-1919) representing Montana. She was one of 50 members to vote against declaring war against Germany during World War I. Serving again in the House (1941-1943) she was the only member of Congress to oppose declaration of war against Japan.

Frances Perkins (1882-1965) First female member of a Cabinet when President Franklin D. Roosevelt named her Secretary of Labor in 1933. Became one of the most important executors of Roosevelt's New Deal Program.

Clare Booth Luce (1903-1987) American playwright and correspondent during WW11. Represented Connecticut in the House of Representatives from 1943-1947. President Eisenhower appointed her Ambassador to Italy, the first American woman ambassador to a major country. She held the post until 1982.

Curator's Desk

Curator Hiram Tindall loves to show off his new desk to the many visitors who come to the office. The rolltop desk was offered to the Society by Harold C. Lovell and his wife, Lulu Lovell, when the H.C.Lovell Company ceased operations after more than 200 years in Stratford Center.

The desk, c. 1870, occupied a space at the family business since the store was known as the L.H.Todd Company, and could have been the desk used by Mr. Todd, grandfather of Harold C. Lovell, Sr.

Todd Lovell contacted the Wm.B. Myer Co. to assist in moving the desk from the Lovell Building to Milford where Richard Blake carefully restored and refinished the surface. The movers also delivered the desk from Mr. Blake's home to where it now stands at the entrance to the office.

Book of Remembrance

The following contributions have been made in memory of:

H. James Wilson

By Carol & Todd Lovell

Margaret Van Giesen Calkins

By: Carol & Todd Lovell, Margaret Ross.
Catherine Moore, Carolyn & Robert Maziarz

Thomas Bradbury

By: Carol & Todd Lovell, Gloria Duggan.
Margaret Jacaruso, Connie & Hiram Tindall
Henry W. Bradbury, B.J.Calkins

Beardsley Fund

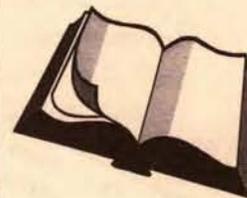
Mrs. Ruth Beardsley Parker has sent a gift in memory of T.R. Beardsley and H.R. Beardsley, her father and brother. Mrs. Parker established the Beardsley Fund several years ago and supports it annually.

Unexpected Gift

Recently, a gift in the amount of \$10,000 was received from Catherine Bunnell Detweiler of Tempe, Arizona. Her very unexpected generosity was acknowledged by Curator, Hiram Tindall.

Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult.

*Charlotte Whitton
(1896-1975)*



Forming the Bridgeport Area Towns

STRATFORD - Formed 1639. Called **CUPHEAG** until 1650. For 150 years its basic boundaries. It was 16 miles long, from the Sound to its North boundary at Newtown. It stretched 4 miles West from the Housatonic River to the Fairfield line.

In 1789 - Ripton Parish became the township of **HUNTINGTON**. It was named after Samuel Huntington, Connecticut Governor from 1786-1796.

In 1797 - Unity Parish was set off to become the Town of **TRUMBULL**. It was named after the then Governor Jonathan Trumbull.

In 1800 - Stratfield Society became a Borough of Stratford and took the name of **BRIDGEPORT**.

In 1821 - **BRIDGEPORT** separated from Stratford and became a town.

In 1823 - New Stratford Society became the Township of **MONROE**.

In 1836 - **BRIDGEPORT** became the sixth city of the State.

In 1853 - **BRIDGEPORT** won the County Seat away from Fairfield after a 22 year squabble in which Norwalk also figured. The first County Courthouse on State Street was completed in 1855, and now serves as the City Hall. It was replaced in 1888 by the present building on Golden Hill Street.

In 1873 - Borough of West Stratford was formed from territory by Yellow Mill Pond and Bruce's Brook.

In 1889 - West Stratford was annexed to **BRIDGEPORT**, and is the section now called **EAST BRIDGEPORT**. - W.S.Lawson-1964

Editor's Note: In 1967 the old City Hall on State Street was renamed McLevy Hall and continues to be used for city offices. In 1965 the former Bridgeport High School on Lyons Terrace, after massive renovations, became the new City Hall.

A new County Courthouse was constructed in the 1960's on Cannon & Broad Streets at the site of the former Howland's Department Store.

If you would be known, and not know, vegetate in a village: if you would know, and not be known, live in a city.

Charles C. Colton

Stratford Historical Society

(203) 378-0630

967 Academy Hill

P.O.Box 382

Stratford, CT 06615-0382

The Editors wish to thank those who have responded favorably to the Newsletter. Your comments are always welcome.
Marie Blake
Diane Wright

Stratford Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting

April 24, 2000 - 7:30 pm

All members of the Society are Welcome to Attend

Please call 378-0630 for information