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# Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

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Volume V Issue 1

September 2000

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

## NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, September 29, 2000 - 7:30pm

Christ Episcopal Church  
2000 Main Street, Stratford

## THE HISTORY OF MILFORD POINT

BARBARA MILTON

Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center

Barbara Milton is the Director of the Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center at Milford Point. She has been gathering information on the History of Milford Point for six years and "has 9,994 years to go." Her references will be first-hand accounts as well as archives, newspaper articles and books.

Her first topic will be the use of the lower Housatonic River by Native Americans, summering ground for the Paugussetts; farmers, the grant of an island by the King to Farmer Knell; tradesmen, the geological reasons that Stratford remained a small town and not a city; oystermen, fishermen, the first environmental regulations on the oyster industry in Milford and the thick runs of shad; the blasting and creation of a salt marsh and the rum runners.

Mrs. Milton will also discuss the development of the Smith Hotel. Around 1888 Mr. George Treat Smith established a hotel, commonly called the Smith Hotel or the Ford Hotel at Smith's Point. Following Mr. Smith's death in 1938, his daughters deeded 8.35 acres of land to the State of Connecticut. One of the guidelines set forth in the deed was that the location be used for nature conservation and educational programs for the public about the ecosystem's preservation. Following the Second World War, the National Guard occupied Smith's Point and maintained a radar station, but little information remains about the point during this time. During the period from 1943 to 1984 local residents fought for the protection of wildlife habitats and against the practice of dredging and pollution in the wetlands.

In the mid 1980's the Connecticut Audubon Society worked on formulating a plan for improving the existing bird sanctuary and in 1986 accepted a lease from the State Department of Environmental Protection which bound CAS to use 8.4 acres of Smith's Point as a bird and wildlife sanctuary. This evolved into total renovation of the old and decrepit hotel on the Point, with the addition of a 35-foot tower that overlooks the Charles E. Wheeler Salt Marsh and Long Island Sound. 1996 marked the completion of the project and its opening to the public.

**The Meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served.  
Bring a Friend**



### REMEMBER:

*The Early American Festival will be on September 16th. This yearly event is a time for families and friends to welcome the change of seasons and enjoy the crafters and demonstrators brought together for your entertainment at Judson House.*

*Rain Date: Sunday September 17th.*

### President John Calhoun

Our Stratford Day activities in June attracted many members and new visitors. They toured Judson House and saw weaving, spinning and rug making demonstrations by professional crafters. Junior members taught colonial games to younger visitors. The Stratford Day Tag Sale was so successful that we are continuing it indefinitely. New items have been donated to fill the emptying tables.

Many thanks to Sandy Rutkowski, daughter Kerri, Diane Matthews, and daughter Samantha for making History Camp 2000 both educational and fun. I was impressed with the enthusiasm and skill of our campers in mastering crafts such as weaving, candle making and quill pen making. They learned how life was lived in colonial Judson House and were excellent guides on camp visitors day. Several campers asked to return next year.

Welcome to Dave Guion, who has started as a new docent this season. He is conducting tours of Judson House and the Museum.

Please fill in and return you election ballot. We are hoping for full member participation.

### Clock Repaired

Last year the Society was presented a wall clock circa 1916 that hung in the former Stratford Trust Company on Main Street in Stratford Center.

Repairs were needed and Mr. Charles Kirby of 64 Meadow Place, Stratford, removed the clock from the wall of the Museum and did the necessary work at his home. The clock is now back in place and running smoothly.

### Summer Camp

Upon graduation from Summer Camp 2000 the following campers became members of the Junior Historical Society:

Caitlin & Kyle Bitsco, Kelly & Nick Butler, Jackie DelGado, Becky Dunlop, Courtney Fitzpatrick, Peter Kapitancek, Lexi Miller, Hannah Panpak, Melissa Rampton, Caitlin Simon, Matthew Berghese.

### Docents Retire

The Board of Directors of the Stratford Historical Society extend their appreciation to Mrs. Bette Johnson and Mrs. Jean Miles for guiding countless visitors through Judson House and the Museum over many years.

Mrs. Johnson, a former teacher in the Fairfield School System, has been a member of the Society for over 19 years acting as a guide for most of that time. Mrs. Miles, a member since 1994, conducted numerous school groups through the facilities before serving on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at Judson House.

Dolores Hctor and David Guion continue to serve our visitors.

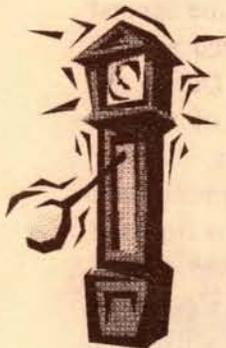
### For Sale

Please call Mrs. Evelyn Watt at 378-2326 if you are interested in purchasing either of two Armetale Pewter plates as follows: Putney Chapel @\$65.00

Railroad Station @\$65.00

Also, one copy of Wilcoxson's History of Stratford 1639-1939 in prime condition priced at \$115.00.

Each year copies of Wilcoxson's History become less available, especially in very good condition. Call Mrs. Watt Now.



## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

We are introducing a new mail-in ballot for the annual election of officers. All members may now participate in the election, regardless of where they live or whether they can attend the General Membership Meeting.

Inclosed is your stamped, postcard ballot. Please complete and return the ballot before October 15, 2000. If you wish to nominate a candidate or work on a committee, so indicate on the ballot.

The new slate of officers for 2000-2001 is as follows:

PRESIDENT	John Calhoun
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	Todd Lovell
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	Gary Jacopian
RECORDING SECRETARY	Diane Wright
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	Marie Blake
TREASURER	Margaret Jacaruso
ASSISTANT TREASURER	Kay Moore
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT	Louis J. Petriel, Jr.

### DIRECTORS

1999-2001	Robert Hctor
1999-2002	Dean Paradise
2000-2003	Frances Sloane
2000-2003	David Guion

### STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Accessions/Inventory	Carol Lovell
Building/Grounds	Vincent Hardy, Todd Lovell
Education	Diane Matthews, Sandy Rutkowski
Exhibits	Marie Kubic
Finance	John Calhoun
Hospitality	Mary Hardy
Hosts & Hostesses	Elizabeth Applegate
League Delegate	Catherine Lawrence
Library	Joyce Bradbury, Gloria Duggan
Membership	Dolores Hctor
Nominating	Louis J. Petriel, Jr.
Program	Leslie Light
Publicity	Avril Westmorland

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee:

Louis J. Petriel, Jr. Chairman	Dolores Hctor
Marie Blake	Gary Jacopian
John Calhoun	Carol Lovell
Dorothy Euerle	Sandra Rutkowski

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## Ebenezer Hurd - Post Rider

Land known as No. 87 was originally laid out to John Hurd, Sr. And by his will bequeathed to his son Isaac, who seems to have died, leaving no children. The property descended apparently to his brother John and his children, according to his father's will, and it was the Hurd homestead for several generations.

Ebenezer Hurd, son of John 2nd., as above, resided on this farm probably nearly all his life, being born April 7, 1703. He became a widely known person according to the following: "This same year (1775), Ebenezer Hurd, a regular post rider, closed a service of forty-eight years, having begun it in 1727. Once in a fortnight, during that entire period, he had made a journey from New York to Saybrook and back, 274 miles. In other words, - for such is the computation - during those forty-eight years he had traveled over as much space as twelve and half times around the world, or as far as to the moon and half-back. Meantime, what of the wife? Bringing up the children, managing the farm and during one year at least, 1767, spinning not less than five hundred yards of wool and flax, all raised on the place, making and mending, especially for that indefatigable rider, who was doubtless hard on his clothes."

This Ebenezer Hurd married in January, 1732, Abigail Hubbell, and they had fifteen children. Their gravestone stands in Huntington burying place, both inscriptions being on one stone. They are:

"Mr. Ebenezer Hurd, died May 7, 1788, aged 87 years

"Mrs. Abigail, His Wife, died April 16, 1783, aged — years."

One of the sons was Ebenezer, Jr., who was also a post rider according to the following "the 28th of November died in Stratford, in Connecticut, of a short illness, Mrs. Elizabeth Hurd, wife of Ebenezer Hurd, Jr., Post Rider of that Place, aged 24 years and three months; Her death is greatly lamented by all her relations. She was the daughter of the Rev. Christopher Newton, of Stratford.

Andrew Hurd, eldest son of the first Ebenezer, was born in 1731, was also a post rider, and resided on the homestead on Old Mill Green until his death, April 29, 1819, aged 89 years. He is still remembered and tradition says he used to call out when he was to stop, "Open the Gate for the King's Post."

From these last items it is probable that the sons often rode post in place of their father.

No. 88 Site of the Old Mill, built in 1652 and 1653, and from which Old Mill Hill and Old Mill Green take their names.

No. 89 Sgt. Charles Burrirt was a descendant of Stephen Burrirt of Stratford, the celebrated Indian fighter in the King Philip's War, and the ancestor of the Hon. Elihu Burrirt, the Learned Blacksmith.

*Orcutt's History of Stratford and Bridgeport, CT 1639-1886*



## Mrs. Patricia P. Ulatowski Stratford Town Clerk Receives Honor

The Society would like to extend congratulations to Stratford Town Clerk Mrs. Patricia Ulatowski. At the Annual Conference in May, 2000 of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks in Rotterdam, the Netherlands Mrs. Ulatowski was elected to the board of directors. She will represent the entire Northeast U.S. until the year 2003. The IIMC is a professional association of municipal clerks with a membership of 15,000.

An employee of the Town of Stratford since 1968, Mrs. Ulatowski has served in the position of Town Clerk since 1988, she is the immediate past president of the New England Association of City and Town Clerks and the recipient of numerous awards.

Unlike many municipal positions the Stratford Town Clerk is not elected or appointed by the governing body but is a town employee. The office is responsible for all Town records; active files as well as the storage disposition and maintenance of inactive and archival material, licensing (marriage, dog, hunting, fishing, etc.), keeper of vital statistics (birth, marriage, death and burial permits) and genealogical searches.

One of the busiest of all town offices Mrs. Ulatowski and her staff perform their duties always with a professional and courteous manner.

The Recorder or Town Clerk whose handwriting and characteristic spelling is thoroughly familiar to all who haunt the Town Clerk's office is of great significance to his own and to later generations. We are dependent upon his faithfulness and accuracy for many of the facts we weave into this history of Stratford.

There is a list of twenty-five town clerk's dating from 1650, with Joseph Curtiss who held the position for fifty consecutive years from 1678 to 1728. A record for public service perhaps unequalled anywhere in New England.

Wilcoxson's *History of Stratford*  
1639-1939

## 62 Years Ago The Stratford News September 23, 1938

A tropical hurricane moved eastward into the Atlantic Ocean Thursday morning leaving in its wake in Stratford, two dead and hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

The death toll included, Paul Castelot, 45, of Birdseye Street, drowned when he attempted to save a power boat from going on the jetty in the Housatonic River. Charles Krolikowski, 68, of Evelyn Street, who died in Bridgeport Hospital from injuries received when a part of the roof of his home crashed down on him as he was standing near the house in the height of the storm.

The hurricane was the first of its kind to visit the town. Freak storms have occurred in the past 50 years in certain sections of the town but Wednesday's high wind and rain was the first general hurricane ever recorded in Stratford.

It tore telephone and electric light wires from poles, smashed 60 and 70 foot trees to the ground, ripped the roofs from garages and houses, plunged the town into darkness, crippled transportation facilities, sent towering waves from Long Island Sound plunging over roadways and isolated the Lordship district from the rest of the town for more than six hours.

With virtually every street in the town blocked by huge fallen trees the work of police and firemen and volunteers was hampered as thousands of residents of nearby communities drove into Stratford attempting to get to Lordship Beach. Beach Drive was pounded by waves and many of the summer cottages were shifted from their foundations. At least six cottages at Long Beach were completely destroyed.

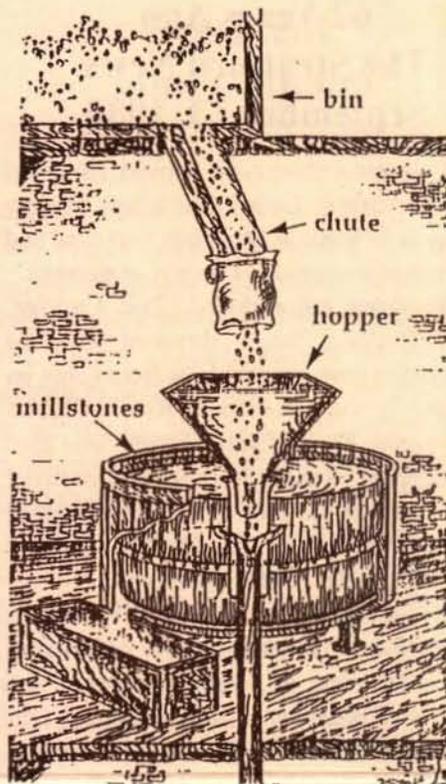
Supt. of Public Works Daniel McLeod reported that more than 50 trees were damaged on Elm Street and department trucks were kept busy for five days removing the trees and stumps. WPA crews were used to remove the debris from Main Street.

In nature, there is less death and destruction than death and transmutation.

Edwin Way Teale,  
*Circle of Seasons*

Having a bad Day?

When you've been "put through the mill," do you feel as if you have been dropped, spun in circles, and crunched?



## PUT THROUGH THE MILL

In early settler communities, farmers took their grain to the Gristmill to be ground into flour. The **gristmill** was an important part of the community. Many sayings came from the tools that were used at the mill and the work that was done there.

The grain was poured into a large bin on the second or third floor of the mill, fell down a wooden chute, and then passed through a hopper into the center of two large millstones. The millstones rotated in different directions and crushed the grains of wheat between them. A person who is having troubles might say that he or she has been "put through the mill."

*Historic Communities-Settler Sayings*

## Stratford Historical Society

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Stratford Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting

October 30, 2000 - 7:30 pm

Catharine B. Mitchell Museum

All Members of the Society are Welcome to Attend

Please call 378-0630 for information