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# Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

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Volume XI Issue 4

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

## NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday March 30, 2007 - 7:30pm

Christ Episcopal Church  
2000 Main Street, Stratford

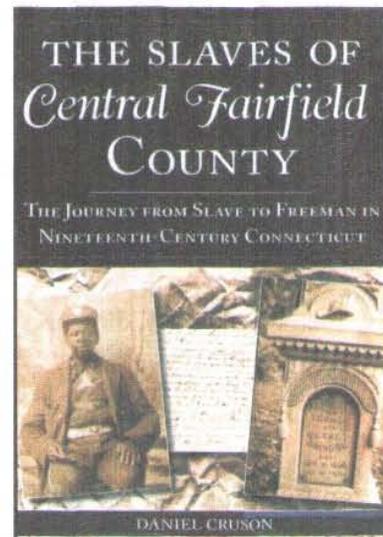
**DANIEL CRUSON**

### “Slaves of Central Fairfield County”

Mr. Daniel Cruson will speak and show slides this evening on recent discoveries in African American Archaeology. He will be summarizing much of what is just coming out in his most recent book, “Slaves of Central Fairfield County.” Part of his presentation will be devoted to the part that Stratford played in the early distribution of slavery in the upper Towns of Fairfield County.

Daniel Cruson is a retired member of the faculty of Joel Barlow High School where he taught courses in anthropology and local history. His abiding interest in these fields has led him to do extensive research and writing on the history of the towns of central Fairfield County including Easton, Redding and Newtown as well as conducting several archaeological investigations in these towns in an attempt to learn more about the lifestyles of their past citizens, both historic and prehistoric. His attempts to acquire information about the early history and culture of this area has also led him to investigate deeply the subjects of vintage photography, early Connecticut architecture, colonial and post-colonial road building, and early cemeteries and their grave markers.

Mr. Cruson is active in a number of organizations dedicated to the research and preservation of local history. For many years he has been a member of the Historical Society in Newtown where he resides. He is a charter member of the Easton Historical Society, is active with The Heritage Preservation Trust of Newtown, Society of American Archaeology and the Archaeological Society of Connecticut.



March 25, 1807

*British Parliament  
abolished slave  
trade.*

*“Whatever day  
makes a man a  
slave, takes half  
his worth away.”  
Homer—Odyssey*

**The Meeting is open to the Public  
Refreshments will be served — Bring a Friend**

**Rudy Mastroianni  
President**

We take special pleasure in commemorating Women's Month, with articles featuring Mrs. Beatrice Lovell and Cordelia Sterling, which trace their legacies of dedicated service and contributions to our town. Our pictorial insert features the works in progress at the Connecticut Air and Space Museum located in the Army Engine Plant. Our newly conceived Scholarship Program aimed at High School Seniors who are Stratford residents is soon to be released to several area high schools. I'll be looking forward to answering your questions about the Scholarship Program, or any factor affecting the state of our Society, following the guest speaker program. RGM

*Wish List:  
Volunteers  
Needed!  
Docents  
School -  
Tours  
& History-  
Camp*

**Army Engine Plant and  
Air Museum**

Recently we visited the large main plant building and, across Sniffen's Lane, the building presently occupied by the Air Museum. (See Insert)



Under Sen. Gunther's auspices, we were first briefed on visitor safety procedures in the main building before being shown the vast empty area that in days gone by had housed the production line for flying boats, fighter planes, helicopters, tanks and engines.

Then, across to the building housing the Air Museum where we found many of the 70 plus volunteers working on the various aircraft restoration projects scattered throughout the rooms on the site. Some of the volunteers had worked at the complex as early as World War II years, including Joe and Annette LoSardo who met there 63 years ago.

**Mrs. Beatrice  
Beach Lovell**

Mrs. Beatrice Beach Lovell (1902-1968) was a prominent member of the Stratford community. Before her marriage to Harold C. Lovell, she was a popular assistant treasurer of the Stratford Trust Company and in 1915 was elected a member of the National Association of Bank Women. It is of interest to note that less than 100 women held official positions in banks throughout the United States and Miss Beach was the youngest bank officer in the country.



Due to her wide range of experience obtained by working through every department of the Stratford Trust Company: savings, commercial, collection and trust departments, Miss Beach went to the Associations convention in Atlantic City fully equipped to discuss authoritatively every phase of banking service.

Harold Lovell, Sr. had 2 teenage children at the time of his marriage to Beatrice Beach: Harold C. Lovell, Jr. and Imogen Juanita Lovell. Todd B. Lovell was born the following year. While raising her son and being there for "Bud" and Imogen, Beatrice Lovell was an active volunteer involved with the Stratford Red Cross, Cupheag Club Women and the Stratford Historical society where she was chairman of acquisitions, a position now held by her daughter-in-law Mrs. Todd (Carol) Lovell.

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*Mrs. Anne Roberts has made a donation to the Stratford Historical Society as a Holiday Gift in honor of her friend Ms Lyn Hubina.*

A Visit to the Army Engine Plant and Aircraft Museum/Workshop with 'Doc Gunther'



'Doc' and the Empty Plant



Bob Dortenzio, Joseph and Annette LoSardo and 'Doc'



Sikorsky Hummingbird  
HO5S-1/S-52-3  
'Early Light Copter'



Sikorsky H-34 Choctaw  
'Anti-Sub Warfare'



Fuselage of Cessna O-2A  
Skymaster  
'Forward Air Control Missions'



Cessna 150  
'Flight Training, Touring  
& Personal Use'  
Also, a PLT 27 Engine



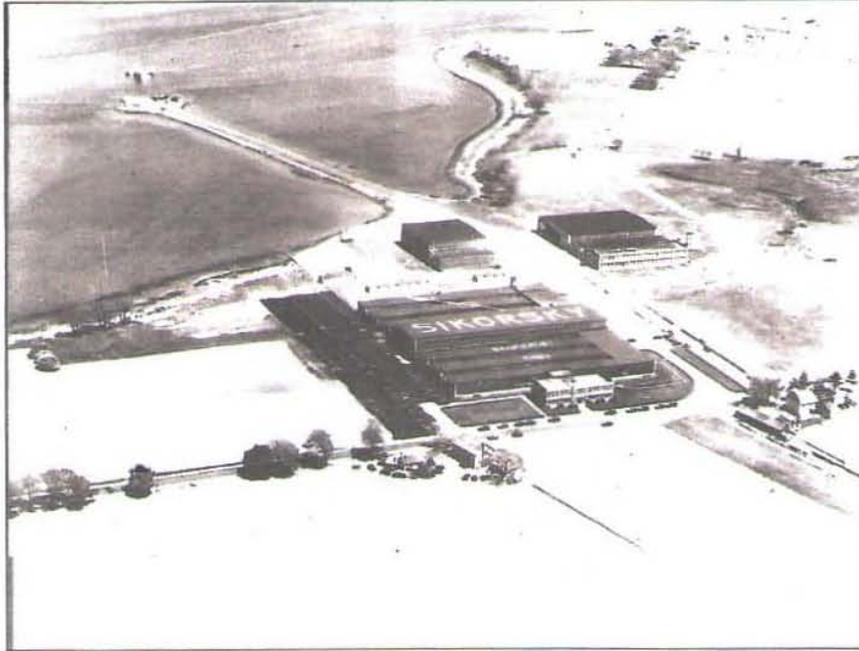
Cessna T-37B Tweet  
'Jet Trainer'



Lockheed T-33B Training Star  
& HO5S-1 Tailcone

# Plant Photos

Circa 1930



**AVCO LYCOMING**  
Gas Turbine Production



## Cordelia Sterling

In her will, Cordelia Sterling, the daughter of Captain John Sterling, donated the gift of the Sterling Homestead, House and Park, in memory of her father, to the people of Stratford and the surrounding area. She died in 1931 and according to her wishes, Sterling House has been utilized as a Community Center since 1932.



Since its opening, Sterling House has been a mecca for young and old. It is dedicated to serving all ages from the toddler to the senior adult, and provides affordable social, educational and recreational activities which assist them in their positive and healthy development. In addition, since 1992 they have had an extensive "food pantry" operation for the needy.

Miss Sterling, the youngest of Captain Sterling's three children, was born in 1846, two years before the first railroad track was laid in Stratford. She, brother John Sterling, Jr., and sister, Catharine, all attended Stratford Academy. Though her life was centered principally at her home and at the nearby First Congregational Church, she always made time for friends and children. Among the causes to which she regularly contributed were care for sick children, The Shut-In Society, education for the under privileged at Tuskegee and Mountain-White schools, the Seamen's Institute in New York, the Grenfell Mission and in the protection of wild birds and domestic animals.

Miss Sterling had hoped that the whole block would eventually become a Community Complex and, interestingly, with the money received for the highway, the Town acquired additional land for the Baldwin Center and for the Sterling Memorial building which became a part of the library. So, much of what she had wished for has come about.

## January Membership Meeting



Pictured above are speaker Robert Berthelson, and Society President, Rudy Mastroianni. Mr. Berthelson's program covered many Connecticut individuals who played significant roles in our Country's founding.

### Mark Your Calendar

On Friday, May 26th, Mrs. Carolyn Ivanoff will speak and her subject will be "Civil War Medicine." All who attended the September 2006 meeting will remember Carolyn's wonderful presentation "American Woman's Suffrage."

### Did You Know

In the late 1800's, a charcoal burner had an occupation near the bottom of the socio-economic spectrum. It involved spending a couple of weeks in the woods cutting about four cords of wood and stacking them carefully in a large mound measuring roughly 10 to 12 feet high. This mound was then covered over with dirt, leaving a small air hole at the bottom where the wood was set afire. The pile of wood would then smolder for the next week, while the charcoal burner lived next to it, watching to make sure that flames did not erupt and turn the wood into ash rather than the more lucrative charcoal. Once the charcoal was ready, it was packed into bushel baskets and carted to Bridgeport by wagon. There it was sold to factories as fuel for their steam engines. Charcoal burning involved a great deal of labor for very little remuneration.

*Sterling House*



*“To extend the community of friendship, of healthful and enjoyment through open air activities, of spiritual quickening by contact with minds alert and purposeful, to provide a center for fine music, for exhibitions of art and for instruction along wanted lines.”*

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**Stratford Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting**  
April 30, 2007  
Catharine B. Mitchell Museum  
All members of the Society are Welcome to Attend  
Please call 378-0630 for information