
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume XII Issue 4

March 2008



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

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday March 28, 2008 - 7:00pm

Christ Episcopal Church

2000 Main Street, Stratford

Carolyn Ivanoff

A Virtual Road Trip to Alaska

Our 49th State



Take the 2007 road trip to Alaska made by Nick and Carolyn Ivanoff as they traveled the 13,000 miles from Connecticut to Alaska, across the Great Plains, through Canada, and the Yukon Territory.

See some of the greatest National Parks in the U. S. and Canada. Follow the Alaskan Highway and travel the Golden circle through our 49th state. Leave the driving to Nick and sit back and enjoy the pictures and the ride as Carolyn narrates the program.



The Stratford Historical Society is once again pleased to present Mrs. Carolyn Ivanoff. Many of our members will remember Mrs. Ivanoff's account of the 70 year struggle for woman's right to vote which brought about the nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, as well as her thoroughly documented Civil War Medicine talk. We hope you will join us and welcome her again.

The meeting is open to the Public
Refreshments will be served — Bring a Friend
Note starting time now 7:00pm

Rudy Mastroianni

President

Our 2008 Scholarship Program announcements have been mailed to local high schools, and one completed application has already been received. Thanks to the Big Y and New Alliance Bank, new additions to Stratford's commercial presence, for selecting some excellent images of Stratford from the Society's archive for display on their walls.

Progress is being made on our project to convert the SHS oral history collection of audio cassettes to digital files. Space permitting, publication of a list of the converted tapes will appear in the May Newsletter.

Also, an effort was started to supplement the tape conversions by a second project to digitize our extensive collection of 35 mm color slides, circa TBD. However, to continue this time consuming task I appeal for your help. Call me at the SHS Office, Tuesdays or Thursdays, 10 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for details.

I regret that I'll miss the March 28 Meeting Program featuring another excellent presentation, A Virtual Road Trip to Alaska by Carol Ivanoff. I'll be enjoying a short respite from the Connecticut climate, in Florida!



Book of Remembrance

In honor of
LYN HUBINA
Given by:
Anne Robert

A Wartime Prayer
by Eleanor Roosevelt

*"Dear Lord, Lest I
continue my complacent
way, help me to
remember that
somewhere, somehow
out there a man died for
me today. As long as
there be war, I then
must ask and answer
am I worth dying for?"*

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Army Nurse Susan Freeman



Nurse Susan Freeman pioneered the way for black women officers in the Army Nursing Corps, when she became the first to make captain.

Returning home to Stratford after WW II, she was a founding member of Chi Eta Phi nursing sorority and a member of the board of the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre.

Guarding the Palace

Hoping to avoid the fate of Anne Boleyn, Moira Cameron, age 42, has become London's first female Beefeater (among 34 men).



The Corsair Restoration Project

Contributions for this worthy cause may be sent to *Corsair Restoration Fund*, @ Connecticut Air & Space Center, P. O. Box 1293, Stratford, CT 06615-1293.



**SPRING TAG SALE
AND
ANTIQUÉ APPRAISAL
MAY 31st**

The Catharine B. Mitchell Museum is becoming well stocked with items of a wide variety for the Spring Tag Sale on Saturday, May 31st.

The Society held Tag Sales in Two-thousand two, three and four which were very successful. With the coming of longer days and milder weather, we hope our members and friends will begin to rummage around their closets, basements and attics for articles to donate to our 2008 sale.

From past sales we have found that old furniture, in moderately good condition, is in great demand. Old dressers, tables, headboards, chairs or any other item along this line will sell. What you can no longer use is what someone else is looking for. Box or bag your old paperbacks and hardcover books, frames and pictures, small appliances, glassware, china, etc. and put them aside for us. We are hoping to have many many items for sale when you all come on the 31st to browse and buy.

At the 2004 Tag Sale our biggest and most attractive display was jewelry. If you have not sorted and untangled your jewelry box or drawer lately, now is the time to see what you really want to wear and what you would like to donate as part of the sale. All kinds of gems and baubles are in demand.

We would appreciate your bringing items to the Society on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9am to 2:30pm. We can arrange for pick up of small or light items at any time, but larger items must wait until after April 15th when stronger help is available.

Volunteers are always welcome either just before the sale for sorting and pricing, or on the day of the sale to help with our bargain hunters. Just call the office at 378-0630 and ask for Marie to set up a schedule.

In conjunction with the **Tag Sale**, the Society is also sponsoring an **Antique Appraisal Show** to be set up in the Carriage House. Mr. Joe McCabe of Milford will be doing the appraisals. We will also be renting space to anyone who wishes to sell any of their own antiques. More details will follow in our May Newsletter.

*"That God once loved a garden we learn in Holy writ.
And seeing gardens in the Spring I well can credit it."*

~Winifred Mary Letts

January Membership Meeting

Gordon M. Williams provided a dissertation on William Howard Taft, our 27th president who, being sandwiched in between Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, has been over-looked for his contributions made in such top government positions as Governor General of the Philippines, Secretary of War and as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court under several Presidents, in addition to those made during his term in office.



"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"
~Percy Bysshe Shelley

Ad in October 1905 Ladies Magazine "The Delineator"

Our Beautifully Illustrated Magazine of Fashion for Fall and Winter

now ready. Send for it. A Million women will read this advertisement and a Million women will want our book.

Styles the Latest

Prices Just Right

No. 767—One of our perfect-fitting handsome tailor-made Suits. Made from the new "Men's Wear" fancy mixtures. Coat silk lined to waist. Magnificent value.

\$25.00

Samples of material on request.

**NEWCOMB
ENDICOTT
COMPANY
Detroit, Mich.**



Settlement of the West Recalled by Curtis Thompson, Uncle of Emigrant Elias Wilcoxson, and Elias' Daughter, Emily

(Article placed in the September 4, 1936 edition of The Stratford News by W. Howard Wilcoxson)

Few persons are now living who can remember Stratford as it was in the early 1840s, and recall the many changes in the people, their habits, customs and modes of living. The spirit of "going West" was then dominant with some families, and one such event, which occurred in the fall of 1846, was recalled some years ago by the late Curtis Thompson, whose uncle, Mr. Elias Wilcoxson, left Stratford with his family to settle in the territory of Iowa.

Elias Wilcoxson and his wife (Phebe Thompson, a sister of Mr. Thompson's father) and their nine children, were then living in an old colonial house which stood up town on the east side of Main Street, just north of Windsor Avenue. The new territory of Iowa to which they emigrated was formed in December of that year. The Indian name of Iowa is said to mean the sleepy one, and perhaps it was a true description of its people before 1840 - Indians, French and Spaniards.

At Mr. Thompson's request, his cousin Emily, then 20 years old and the eldest of the children, wrote the following account of the journey from Stratford to Iowa. The steam-boats and canal boats afforded the means of travel. The old Naugatuck, nicknamed the "Iron Pot" was the steamboat which then ran from Derby to New York, stopping at Stratford. The old account as she wrote it reads as follows: -

"It was a great undertaking for my father with his large family of children to start for the distant territory of Iowa, and when it became known among his neighbors and relatives that he was going it caused great talk and excitement. Iowa was then but sparsely settled, and the Indians were troublesome. They had, indeed, massacred a short time previous a colony of settlers and committed other grave depredations, so that the journey and the future seemed fraught with danger. My father was induced to go by representations of my cousin, Ephram Wheeler, who wrote in flowing terms of the rich and fertile soil, the mildness of the climate (saying nothing of the rigor of Iowa winters), and the beautiful situation on the banks of the majestic Mississippi. The land, then selling at \$1.25 per acre now sells for \$200 per acre.

"We started for the West on October 15, 1846. The parting from friends and relatives in Stratford was sad and trying. It seemed like a funeral procession as we drove slowly down the wide old street of Stratford from our house to the dock, about 1 1-2 miles. Our friends were standing at the doors and windows and on the streets, bidding us goodbye, while from all came kindly and tearful greetings. We left Stratford about 5 o' clock p.m. on the steamer Naugatuck for New York. (I well remember the intense interest attending their departure, which proved to be a final parting for my father and his sister.) "The next morning we took a steamer for Albany, enjoying the delightful scenery of the Hudson River. From Albany to Lake Erie we journeyed by the slow but very pleasant way of the Erie Canal. My brothers were pleased with this mode of travel. They got off when the boat stopped and walked or ran along, keeping company with it until another stop was made. We had our most valuable chest of goods stolen on this part of our journey. The chest contained the family silver, many being heirlooms of the Wilcoxson family, some valuable books, a large number of fine linen sheets, which were made of the flax raised by my father, the thread was spun by my mother and the linen was woven by my father.

"Another family by the name of S. B Wilcox was on the boat and when they got off at Buffalo, they took our chest with them and kept it. At Buffalo we embarked on a lake steamer, the Indiana, intending to go through the lakes, but a storm arose and it was so rough that we left the steamer and crossed the state of Ohio from Cleveland to Cincinnati, on the canal. From there we sailed down the Ohio and up the Mississippi River to St. Louis on the steamer Phoenix, and while on this voyage a sad accident occurred. My brother David fell overboard and was drowned; he sank for the last time just as the small boat sent to his assistance had nearly reached him. His cap only was brought back to his agonized parents and family. Over 50 years has passed since that sorrowful occasion, yet the scene is still vivid in my mind; the startling cry of child overboard, the frantic rush of parents looking for their children, my dear mother crying "I know it is David", and the grief and horror of steaming away and leaving

our dear brother beneath the water was heart rendering. At St. Louis we took the steamer Atlas for Keokuk, Iowa, from which place we went 12 miles around the rapids by land, stopping at Montrose, a place opposite Nanvoo, where Mormonism once had its seat under the prophet Joseph Smith.

"The last stage of our journey was made on the steamer Fortune, by which we reached Davenport, Iowa, in the night of November 18, 1846. The sad death of brother David had cast such a gloom over us as to make us feel disheartened, and we heartily wished that we had never left our Stratford home. Soon, however, our parents moved on to their 200 acre farm in Pleasant Valley, 7 miles from Davenport, while my sister Mary and I remained in Davenport, where I was married to Lewis Clemons, who had come out with us from Old Stratford. Davenport had then a population of 500, now it has 30,000. It was, at that time, a resort for wealthy Southern families during the hot season, and the bluffs were covered with a growth of shrubs and trees where now are palatial mansions."

The grave stone, still standing in Union Cemetery erected "To the Memory of David Zabaeski Wilcoxson, son of Elias and Phebe Wilcoxson, who was drowned in the Ohio River, November 9, 1846, aged 12 years and 7 months," is a mute reminder of the tragic event recalled in the foregoing letter, and seems to me to be worthy of record, as a part of Old Stratford's Annals.



The Year 1908

Ford Model T. introduced.



The first ever [beauty contest](#) is held in Folkestone, England.

Devastating earthquake hits [Messina](#), killing 100,000.

[Crete](#) votes for union with [Greece](#) (union is not fully effected until 1913).

"Tunguska Event" - meteor impact in Siberia. The explosion is equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima bombs.

SOS becomes the standard radio distress symbol.

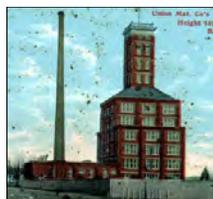
[Mother's Day](#) is celebrated for the first time.

Sixteenth Amendment to US Constitution authorizing government to collect [income tax](#) is ratified.

- and in Bridgeport:



Wheeler and Wilson
Sewing Machine Shop



Union Metallic Company
"Shot Tower" Height 167'



Locomotive Factory Scene

The photographs are the property of the Bridgeport Public Library Historical Department.

Stratford's Drum and Bugle Corps
1952, 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962



Connecticut Yankees Audio CD - Copies Available: \$15.00 + \$3.00 S/H

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*“The first day of spring is one thing, and
the first spring day is another.
The difference between them is some-
times as great as a month.”*
~Henry Van Dyke

COMPUTER CORNER

e-mail us at: Judsonhousestfd@aol.com
Fax: 203-378-2562
On the Web: www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.com

Stratford Historical Society Governing Board
Meeting April 28, 2008 7:00pm
Catharine B. Mitchell Museum
All members of the Society are Welcome to Attend
Please call 203-378-0630 for information