
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume XIII Issue 1

September 2008



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

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday September 26, 2008 - 7:00pm

Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street, Stratford

John Hourihan

“History isn’t in the Books - It’s in the Living”

John Hourihan, an award-winning opinion columnist and an editor for the *Connecticut Post* in Bridgeport, Connecticut, has found time to coach youth sports teams over the past 20 years. He’ll tell of his early recollections, and talk about how personal experiences of each individual could be used to solve problems, a new take on how history repeats itself, much of it from his new unpublished book "Parables for a New Age" and some from his last book, "Play Fair and Win". In the latter, he shared some of what he’d learned about coaching young people, and gave his thoughts on teaching youngsters to play baseball and, also, the lessons coaches should pass on to their players and how they can apply those lessons to life off the ball field. He has also talked with *Education World* about how teachers might use his book, and how the work of teachers and coaches can complement each other.

Tag Sale/Antique Appraisal

The Society sincerely appreciates the many contributions of all description donated for the May 30th Tag Sale; and to the many Volunteers who helped sort and display the items, “**THANK YOU**” for your assistance!

THANK YOU to Joseph Kabe, and his assistants, who from 10am to 1:30pm appraised articles in the Beach Family Carriage House.

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



Rudy Mastroianni, President

As the 2007-2008 activity year comes to a close for the Historical Society, it is with great pleasure to write that it was another busy and productive one! That is made evident by the included articles and photos covering the accomplishments.

Historically (pun intended!), in accordance with the Society's By Laws, this issue announces that it is the time of the year to conduct the election of the Society's Governing Board.

The slate of candidates, nominated, by the Board is presented on the following page. The attached ballot offers all Society members receiving this newsletter two options: approve the election of the nominees, or place in nomination the names of your choices and offices. Nominations from the floor may also be made at the September 26 meeting, at which the final vote will be taken. Please return ballot cards by October 15. Election results will be

We have an opportunity for students of Stratford history to help carry on the effort to digitize our extensive archive of 35 mm color slides, of which many were taken by former Town Historian Lew Knapp.

Thanks to **Arla Mojcik**, summer volunteer and granddaughter of the late Dave Guion past president, she made great progress during several weeks at the Society's office scanning slides. The conversion part has been straightforward, but dates and identities provided of the subject matter in the slides are very general. Labeling the slides will require much help from the memories of Stratfordites reaching back to the 19th and 20th centuries. Call the Society to volunteer your help.

And, thanks to **C. J. Mojcik**, Arla's brother, who spent several weeks removing items left over from the Tag Sale. He also helped with and re-

corded research for the proposed RR parking garage. We wish C.J. success in his quest to attain Eagle Scout rank.

Plan on attending the September 26 Meeting. The program features a presentation by John Hourihan, a columnist and wire editor for the CTPost.

Curtis/s Society Reunion & Meeting

The Society will be holding their 69th anniversary meeting in Newtown from Friday, October 17th thru Sunday, the 19th. It is held in the New England region in even years, according to tradition and by-laws, and in keeping with the origins of so many Curtis/s lines.

Activities including local touring and social gatherings. For those visiting from a distance, rooms may be obtained at the Stony Hill Inn in nearby Bethel, Ct. Further details can be obtained via the internet at <http://www.curtis-curtiss.com/>.

Book of Remembrance

The following donations have been made in Memory of:

Catherine C. Lawrence

Given by:
Dorothy Euerle
Todd & Carol Lovell
Hiram Tindall



Kim Plavcan

Given by:
Richard Dlugos

In Honor of: Lyn Hubina

Given by:
Anne Roberts

In Honor of the Birthday of Carolyn Ross

Given by:
Lyn Hubina

House Tours

Judson House has been a very busy place for the first three months of our 2008 visiting season. There have been tours almost every Sunday and Wednesday since the beginning of June.

Visitors of note included two Judson families all the way from Michigan, and another Judson descendent from Virginia. Many of our out of state visitors read about the Judson House in the various travel guides found closer to their homes. Several members brought relatives and friends to tour the House .

On Stratford Day, Carolyn West, a local artist who runs the Little Red School House on Main Street, brought three groups from her summer camp again this year on Stratford Day. One group did oil paintings of Judson House which are on display in the museum.

Helping our docents are a wonderful team of hostesses. Many have served in the past and several are new members whom we hope to involve in Society activities. We were especially encouraged by the response of this year's History Campers who came with a parent, dressed in costume and participated in the tours.

We ask for your help to make the next two months just as successful.. Tell your family, friends and neighbors about this wonderful resource and urge them to stop in for a tour of Judson House on any Wednesday or Sunday during our hours of 12 to 3pm. until our closing day in Wednesday, October 29.

Corsair Restoration Brief

Aircraft in Aviation School hangar for removal of outer wing panels and power wash. Then it will be relocated to the Connecticut Air & Space Center (CASC) for major restoration work. Ledger and photographic record being kept of process.

Presently anticipating an Open House restoration fund raising event at the CASC in late October.

Historical Notes*

REAL ESTATE in colonial Connecticut was important economically, socially and politically. It formed about two-thirds of the total wealth of a family. Acquisition of land was the principal way by which parents could provide for their children and their own old age. Undeveloped land might be worth £5 - £10 per 100 acres, but about £2 an acre if improved. An 80 acre parcel might sell for £80, equal to about a year's labor of a skilled worker or twice that of a farmhand. This price remained about the same for nearly 100 years.

GRISTMILLS were so important even to the earliest settlers that towns granted concessions in the form of land, a monopoly of the site, or perhaps relief from taxation to whoever would construct one. Building a large gristmill involved the construction of a dam, the purchase and placement of a water wheel, the installation of other wheels to carry the power to the mechanism turning the stones, and the making or buying, transportation, and mounting of the big quern stones themselves, not to mention the saws if these were to be used. All that required capital, which often came from several persons, but the profit was attractive. People had no choice but to use the mill and to pay the owner, or the miller, if two different people, promptly because he retained a share of whatever he ground.

THE PRACTICE OF OWNING THE COVENANT The half-way covenant began to be accepted in the 1650s by a number of churches. Children of any baptized individual could be baptized regardless of whether either parent had or had not been admitted to full communion. It meant a baptized person could have some rights, such as having their children baptized, but could not partake of the Lord's Supper. (*Colonial Records of Connecticut, 1719-1725, p. 161*). After the renewal of the covenant in 1694, children in families were baptized at one time.

English Language in the 17th Century*

Our ancestors who lived in the seventeenth century understood the English language of Shakespeare's time but would have had difficulty in communicating with us today, and we with them. Even though the Pilgrims in Plymouth all came from English backgrounds, they spoke seventeen different dialects! The English language has constantly evolved over the centuries with new words, meanings, idioms, pronunciations and regional dialects. It has been said that a trained linguist can tell within fifty miles where someone in the United States has grown up.

Alan Major in his book *A New Dictionary of Kent Dialect* states that pronunciations and the meanings of words varied from village to village which made it difficult for strangers arriving in the village to communicate. For example, in Kent the 'h' at the beginning of a word was silent, i.e. 'ood' for wood, 'og' for hog. Also, the 'd' was used for 'th', i.e., 'dis' for this, 'dat' for that, 'den' for then. Also, the 'd' at the end of a word was silent, i.e., 'pon' for pond, and a 'v' became 'w', i.e., 'wan' for van and 'wery' for 'very'. Major notes that although Kent and Sussex share a border, the different dialects can barely be understood a few miles away. While those in other counties said, "I be," those in Kent also use, "I're" as in "I are sorry." Mr. was "Muster," was became "wus," oats was "wuts" and road was "roo-ad." The pronunciation of town names could be different from the way they were spelled, i.e., "Metstun" for Maidstone and "Trossley" for Trottisccliffe.

Some terms from other parts of England that are unintelligible to us are: "daft as a boiled owl" - no use to anyone; "as thick as 6 planks" - most unintelligent; "firkle about" - to search for something; "jiffle" - to wiggle; "mardy" - sullen. In Worcestershire "peasy-pounce" is peas and beans growing together; "pick up his crumbs" is to regain health after an illness; and "old woman picking her geese" means it is snowing.

REMEDIES AND SUPERSTITIONS*

Whooping cough - on nine successive mornings give a slice of bread previously buried in the ground for 24 hours. Or, move the patient under a bramble branch rooted at both ends and the cough will leave him.

Nose bleed - wear a skein of red silk around the neck.

Headache - wear a snake skin inside the hat.

Corns - cut them on the first Friday after the full moon.

You will be unlucky if the first lamb you see in the season is facing you.

Nail a horseshoe to a door in a house, stable or barn and it will prevent witches from entering.

Sore eyes - put rain water on them caught on Ascension Day, called "Holy water."

To prevent witchcraft, take a little earth from a young man's grave, place in a small bag, and wear it on the head.

If two persons wash their hands at the same time in the same bowl, they must spit in the water, otherwise they will quarrel before the day is over.

"A whistling maid, a crowing hen / Are neither good for God nor men."

Starred (*) subjects taken from the Hubbell Family Historical Society Newsletter.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

We are once again asking for a mail-in ballot for the annual election of officers. Please complete and return the ballot before October 15, 2008. If you wish to nominate a candidate or work on a committee, please come to the September 26, 2008 meeting.

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2008-2009

PRESIDENT*	Rudy Mastroianni
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT*	Todd Lovell
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT*	-vacant-
RECORDING SECRETARY*	Barbara Firisin
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY*	Shirley McCormack
TREASURER*	Robert Hoctor
ASSISTANT TREASURER*	Margaret Jacaruso

*Comprise the Executive Committee

DIRECTORS

2006-2009	Shirley McCormack
2006-2009	Judy Kurmay
2007-2010	Rebecca Arkenberg
2008-2011	Rev. George Birge

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS (1st Name Listed)

Accessions/Exhibits	Carol Lovell, Marie Blake
Buildings/Grounds	Todd Lovell, Eric Iott
Education	
School Tours	Barbara Firisin
History Camp	Sandy Rutkowski
Docent Recruitment & Training	Diane Matthews
Finance	Todd Lovell
Hospitality	Pam Hutchinson
House Tours, Hosts & Hostesses	Dolores Hoctor
Library	Gloria Duggan, Marie Blake
Membership	Dolores Hoctor
Newsletter	Dick Steele, Marie Blake
Program	Marie Blake, Shirley McCormack
Publicity	Dorothy Euerle
Town Historian Emeritus	Lewis G. Knapp

Nominating Committee: Governing Board as a whole

Interim Happenings

Corsair Off the Pedestal - Headed in for Restoration



Stratford Day Exhibits at the Perry House

Stratford Historical Society



Barbara Firisin

Boothe Park & Museum



Bob Katz & Bessie Burton

Helicopter Museum



Fred & Gale Whittemore

Other Events

Society School Tour - Stratford High School



Memorial Day on Academy Hill



Society History Camp



Making Butter



Volunteers



Preparing Herbs

History Camp 2008

History Camp was a very exciting place to be the week of July 7-11 this summer. We had 21 campers and some very warm weather!

Each day campers learned about an aspect of colonial life followed by a related hands on activity. The first day the campers dipped candles, made butter, learned about herbs and made potpourri, and learned about chores children needed to do everyday to help the household to function.

On Tuesday the campers learned about early American education. They wrote with quills, made horn-books and chapbooks. They also made part of our 18th century costumes for graduation. The girls made hats and the boys made haversacks.



On Wednesday the campers added a new feature to the camp - a walking tour of the town. The highlight was a special tour of Perry House. On our return we learned about Native Americans, made necklaces and tried our hand with carpentry by making a candle box.

Thursday was devoted to learning about Judson House. The students learned about the history and artifacts of the six rooms and how to weave.

Friday was very exciting for the campers. The 21 campers graduated and, as part of the Junior Historical Society, gave their first tour as docents to friends and relatives. This was followed by a picnic enjoyed by all. It was a week of fun, learning and making new friends. Hope to see everyone again next year!

History Camp picture CD's available at \$5.00 each, plus \$3 for mailing. Call the Society.

May Membership Meeting

After a brief membership meeting at which one of the three scholarship awards was presented, the Ash Creek String Band delivered an evening of toe-tapping music as promised. Their performance was enjoyable, and the dance numbers brought many out on the floor.



Scholarship Awards

Winners of the Society's 2008 \$1,000 Scholarship Awards were: **Mark Yaworowski**, a graduate of Notre Dame High School in Fairfield, who is completing an Eagle Scout project this summer by writing of a walking tour through Stratford entitled "Journey Through the Past". Mark will be attending Quinnipiac College; **Aleisa Tierney**, a graduate of Stratford High, who has shown interest in many worthwhile issues including American politics, and the impact of oil on the global economy; and **Bethany deGant**, a graduate of Stratford High, who has written and won many essay contests on American history. Bethany is looking forward to becoming a lawyer.



Pictured is Todd Lovell making the presentation on behalf of the Society to Mark, with Mark's family to his side.

Membership Reminder

September is the beginning of a new membership year. A membership envelope for the year 2007-2008 is enclosed with this Newsletter for your convenience. Thank you for your continued support.

Stratford Bird Festival

This new and special event is scheduled for Saturday, October 4th with the Perry House as headquarters, but will be celebrated at many locations throughout the Town including bird walks to the Great Meadows Marsh, Roosevelt Forest and other locations. Artwork of local artists and crafts people will be on display, with bird decoy carvers hopefully on hand to demonstrate their talent; and vendors of binoculars, bird books and related items will be there. It is also expected that the lives and times of Stratford's two prominent bird decoy carvers, Albert Laing and Charles "Shang" Wheeler will be discussed and highlighted. (Source: Meg Barone's article, page 26, in the 2008 Town Guide.)

Decoys in the 'Larson' display case in the Society's Museum.



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COMPUTER CORNER

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On the Web: www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.com

Stratford Historical Society Governing Board Meeting

October 27, 2008 7:00pm

Catharine B. Mitchell Museum

All members of the Society are Welcome to Attend

Please call 203-378-0630 for information