
Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

Volume XVIII Issue 2

November 2013



Capt. David Judson House c 1750

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, November 22, 2013 - 7:00pm

Christ Episcopal Church
2000 Main Street, Stratford

Walter Woodward

New England's *Other* Witch Hunt



Everyone knows about the witch hunt at Salem in 1692. But few people know that in the years before Salem, Connecticut was New England's fiercest witch prosecutor. The first person hanged for witchcraft in New England came from Windsor, and every single person indicted for witchcraft in Connecticut in its early years was convicted and hanged.

Walt Woodward brings this extraordinary, but nearly forgotten story to life, in a lecture that begins with the Protestant Reformation and traces its history all the way through the Hartford Witch hunt of the 1660'S - a nightmare of trials and executions that preceded Salem by a generation. He also shows how Connecticut's Governor John Winthrop, Jr. and his friend Rev. Gershom Bulkeley intervened to transform Connecticut from New England's most aggressive witch hunter to a colony that completely ended executions for witchcraft thirty years before they even began at Salem.

Along the way, he answers all those questions you've wondered about the early witch hunts, and explains why almost everyone in the 1600s believed that witchcraft was very real, and terribly dangerous.



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



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dolores Hctor and all of the docents that participated in this year's school tours. It was a great success. Dolores and the docents put in a lot of time and effort and they did a wonderful job. The response we got from the teachers was that the tours were thoroughly enjoyed by all the students, parent chaperones and the teachers themselves.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

Shirley McCormack

Repairing the Judson House Basement Walls



Eric Iott with walls & corridor under repair



OFFICE NOTES

A proposal has been given to the Stratford Historical Society by members Richard Elias and member Dan Griswald in regards of WW II. The proposal is to initiate a research project focus ing on Stratford and its people during WW II that will culminate in an extensive archive, displays, program and commemorative events. SHS currently owns some WW II related items that we could put on display. If you are interested in working on any aspect of this project, please contact the society and we will forward the information.

We are looking for someone to assist Todd Lovell in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you are good with numbers and are willing to learn how to do a little stock trading on the computer with help from Todd and Bob Sammis, we need you. Please call Shirley McCormack at the society on Tuesday or Thursday or e-mail me at home at Shirlmac7@sbcglobal.net

To you late dues payers - Please get them paid by December 30th to stay on the Membership List and continue to receive our Newsletter.



Scrap of Newspaper with date of April 19, 1900

Stratford High School 50th Class Reunion

Twenty-five members of the Stratford High School Class of 1963 spent the morning of Saturday, September 23 during their 50th reunion at the Stratford Historical Society touring the Judson House and Museum. Many had come from as far away as California and Florida to participate in the event.

Judy Kurmay, Pam Hutchinson and Dolores Hctor were the docents who took them through the House and showed them the Museum exhibits. They were most interested and appreciative of our efforts. They presented the Society with a check for \$250.00 for admission and as a Book of Remembrance gift for Elden Dustin. He was Assistant Principal of Stratford High School when they were there. He later became the principal of Bunnell. They may not have known that Elden Dustin was a valuable member of the Society, instrumental in transforming the Judson House into its present 18th Century appearance and was also a docent.



School Tours

The crisp, sunny days of October brought hundreds of third graders from all the public and parochial schools in Stratford to the Judson House and Museum to learn about how their town began.

From a group of dedicated and knowledgeable docents in suitable period dress they heard stories of townspeople, walked through a house suitably furnished with items of long ago and tried their hand at using and creating a few items from that long ago time.

They learned that the lives of children in those days were very different from the lives of children today, how differently they were treated and how the family depended upon them.

Ask a third grader how a pomander improved the scent of the air, how a house was put together without nails how the goodwife knew when the oven was hot and how important it was to know how to weave.

Houses were without electricity, plumbing and a furnace, but people survived and prospered. It took strength and determination. That's what we want our third graders to understand from their visit.



U.S. flag flies on new pole at Putney Oronoque Cemetery by Greg Reilly

A flagpole to fly the American Stars and Stripes has been installed at the entrance of Putney Oronoque Cemetery on Main Street Putney, just south of Boothe Park.

Putney Oronoque Cemetery Association agreed to a proposal by local historian Todd Lovell to place a flagpole there where Civil War soldiers and many of Stratford's early farmers are among the buried. The cemetery was established in 1824, according to Bob Halliday, president of Putney Oronoque Cemetery Association.

"The flagpole indicates that someone cares," Lovell said. "There is a continuation of life. You are not alone."

To Halliday, the U.S. flag is a current symbol, but it reflects the past. "The flag represents superlative deeds done in the U.S. military and," he emphasized, "in the community."

The 33-foot fiberglass pole at the one-acre burial ground was erected on Sept. 3 with money from the cemetery association treasury and other donations.

It is the fifth flagpole in Stratford that Lovell has been involved in installing. His family worked with the town about 30 years ago and installed a 44-foot pole in Stratford Center. That pole was destroyed in a storm and is now represented by a smaller pole near The Milford Bank on Main Street.

Other poles erected with the leadership of Lovell are at Union Cemetery, The Stratford Historical Society, and The Burying Ground cemetery behind the Stratford Library.

The cemetery is active with visitors and has a few plots remaining available, according to Halliday.



The flag at Putney Oronoque Cemetery at half-staff on Sept. 12, as ordered by Gov. Malloy, in honor of Staff Sgt. Todd J. Lobraico Jr., 22, of New Fairfield, who was killed Sept. 5 in Afghanistan while on active duty. Greg Reilly photo.

Source: The Stratford Star
Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013



HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Presented by the Stratford Junior Historical Society

December 7th 2013 11:00-4:00

Admission: adults \$3 - children \$1-under 5 free



The Captain David Judson House

Built circa 1750 by Capt David Judson on the site of his grandfather's 1639 stone house. Judson House is a fine example of Georgian architecture which contains period pieces of Stratford origin.

Until 1925, when the Curtiss sisters [Judson descendants] donated the house to the Historical Society, many generations of Judson called the Judson House "home."

Christmas would not have been celebrated by our Town's early settlers. Religious custom forbade it. Early accounts record December 25 as any other day. Christmas celebrations became popular in the Victorian era.

In this spirit we have decorated the house for the 2013 Christmas season. We have tried to remain true to our forefathers' resourcefulness, using spices, nuts, berries and greens to add a festive touch to our holiday tour.

As you tour our historical house look for displays that tell the origins of many holiday traditions.

For the children there is a special Holiday Scavenger Hunt. Find all of the items listed on the sheet in the house and receive a candy cane.

Please also visit our Catherine Bunnell Mitchell Museum and enjoy some cider and holiday cookies while you are entertained with music provided by The Hearthside Waits.

Our Gift Shop is open and has many delightful holiday gift selections for adults and children.

For more information go to stratfordhistoricalsociety.org or call 203-378-0630

A James Farm Road Story

As he waited at the Stratford railroad station for his brother to arrive with the truck, young Joseph Kubic thought about the life he had left behind and the new one he was about to enter. The trip east in 1926 had not been an easy one, for it had been by boxcar with the animals that he and his brother, George, had brought with them from the farm in Ohio. Now, settling in a new location seemed promising. However, he had been waiting almost 3 hours for his other brother, John, to come from Bridgeport with the truck they needed, and Joseph was getting anxious. How would he manage to reach the new homestead on James Farm Road with the 2 big hound dogs, more than 40 chickens, and a cow if John didn't get back soon? To kill time, he continued trying, without success, to milk the cow. After five days the cow had dried up and, only later at the farm after calving, would its milk flow again.

Thankfully, brother and truck arrived, and they proceeded with the loading of the furniture, dogs and chickens, then the cow onto the tailgate. The boys then drove up Main Street through Putney to a farming section near the north end of James Farm Road, and to the farm their parents had purchased from Thomas Cook. Known as Oronoque Dairy, the property extended from James Farm Road eastward to pasturelands in the vicinity of present-day Oronoque Village, southward through the area containing residences along present-day North Pasture Lane, and included land on the west side of the roadway where we now see the electric highlines. With extensive pasturelands, the farm was already established as a dairy and had a working cider mill. Added to that, there were pigs and geese, and more chickens and cows.

In his recollections, Joseph Kubic also cites the special appeal of the fruit trees that grew on the property. They had apple, peach, cherry, pear and walnut trees. The cider mill was a big draw throughout the year, especially at Thanksgiving, when people from all over town came for their holiday supply of cider. Nor was there any waste of produce due its aging into hard cider, as this was during the years of Prohibition.

The cider mill burned down in 1950, ending that era for the Kubics. Their dairying had become unprofitable due to skyrocketing feed costs and price ceilings on milk sales. Thus, although still home to later generations of the family it is not the same farm/dairy site as it was in the first half of the 1900's.

September's General Meeting

Interesting and well attended presentation by Keith Miller about the 17th Connecticut Regiment during the Civil War.



September's Riverlights Parade





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See what's happening at the Society - get in touch with us.

We love to hear from you!

We are trying to get 200 likes on our Facebook page. The 200th person will receive a free one year membership to the Society.

So visit our Facebook page and "like us"!

375th Anniversary coming up in 2014!

An early American Festival is being planned for September 21 and 22 of 2014, on the grounds of the Historical Society.

Stratford Historical Society

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On the Web: www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org

Upcoming Events: Call for Information

January 31, 2014

Gen. Membership Meeting 7PM

"Bridgeport's Old Palace and Majestic Theatres"

- Jay Misencik