

---

---

# Stratford Historical Society >> UPDATE

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

---

Volume XVIII Issue 5

May 2015

---



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

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, May 29, 2015 - 7:00pm

Christ Episcopal Church  
2000 Main Street, Stratford

### Patriots of Liberty

Presented by Patty Carter

featuring

**Betsy Ross Deborah Sampson Elizabeth Cady Stanton Amelia Earhart**



For our May program Patty Carver will be performing a musical based on the lives of famous historical women. The names of a few are Nellie Bly, Amelia Earhart, Dolly Madison, and Betsy Ross.

Patriots of Liberty is a one-woman tour de force musical presentation where four noted women of American History are portrayed. This Old Hat is an original musical that brings the following women of American History to life: Betsy Ross tells her unique story about the first American flag; Deborah Sampson tells of her adventures when she disguised herself as a man to fight in the Revolutionary War; Elizabeth Cady Stanton speaks of the Women's Suffrage Movement, women's dress reform and her contemporary, Harriet Tubman; Amelia Earhart tells the story of her solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. One Hour in length. Includes a Q&A session.



\*\*\*\*\*

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

---

### THE NETWORKERS

Recently the Stratford Historical Society has joined a new group of Networkers from the local Historical Societies of the area organized by Pam Hutchinson at the Trumbull Historical Society.

The purpose of the group is to share ideas, strategies and general information from a list of suggested topics prepared in advance of each meeting. The meetings are hosted bi-monthly at various Society sites. The March meeting was held at the Stratford Historical Society Museum for about 25 interested participants.



Liz Shapiro, Executive Director of the CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS was invited to attend. She has a wealth of knowledge concerning how to reach specific groups for every possible question a society might need help with. She also had some very good advice for those present.

She cautioned those societies that do open hearth cooking in their houses, that the insurance is very expensive and that it is necessary to read the fire insurance policy very carefully to be sure of the terms. A house fire could be catastrophic and might not be covered. On the subject of chimneys, it was pointed out that if chimneys are screened, it prevents chimney swifts from nesting, thereby reducing the bird population. It is possible to build a false chimney for the birds.

She commented as well on the discussion topic of the day, "cleaning historic houses" and advised not to use household cleaning products. The best preservation is climate control. At Judson House we feather dust, dry dust and dry mop to keep the House presentable for visitors. It was noted by another member of the group that in seeking grants, it was important to have a written cyclical account of the cleaning procedures, i.e. what is done, when and how often and who does it.

It was interesting to note that the Connecticut Association of Social Studies Teachers is beginning to approach Historical Societies on their curriculum development of local history mandated by the state. The Stratford Historical Society has a long record of reaching out to the schools to bring their third and fifth grade classes to tour our facilities in compliance with their curriculum.

The second, Behind the Scenes goes with the school tour pictures.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The spring tours for the fifth graders concerning Stratford during the Revolutionary War have begun. That means seventeen days beginning on April 23 and ending on Friday, May 29 of teaching thirty classes or approximately 700 children. Thirty docents (9 each day for three hours each) will be giving us over 550 hours of volunteer time. The Colonial Life tour in the Fall is almost as demanding.

But that is only part of the story. Each docent begins as a student of our docent training program taking a total of eight two hour classes of instruction on site and countless hours of studying the material independently, plus a practice session and time spent acquiring the period dress worn during the tours.

Even before the classes begin, it takes many hours to organize and prepare the material. New docents are provided with a copy of the Handbook and additional background information pertinent to each lesson according to the rooms in the House or the displays in the Museum.

This is not training for the faint of heart. The people who become docents love working with children, love history and are serious about contributing to the education of the town's young people. They spend many hours familiarizing themselves with the material that they are going to present to the children.

Behind the scenes more time is needed for scheduling. The schools have to be contacted for preferred dates. Somebody has to be on hand to fit those requests onto a calendar, answer questions and follow up on reminders.

Somebody has to be willing to sort out days available from our staff of docents and assign them in equal distribution to the days requested by the schools. This can't be done in a day or two. Most likely it is more than a week or two of preparing, contacting, responding, changing and confirming.

Meanwhile, the House, the Necessary and the Carriage House have to be prepared for visitors with a thorough cleaning and staging of material appropriate for the Spring or Fall tour. On each of the tour days the buildings have to be opened and lighted, the flag raised and the outdoor pathways cleared. Afterward everything is checked, the buildings are closed and locked waiting for the next time.

This year we have been able to include a segment on military marching thanks to the generosity of the National Guard and the kindness of Sergeant Papadopoulos who has been conducting the drills.

School tours are a tremendous undertaking and a tremendous service provided by the Historical Society to the town, its children and its education system. Our mission is to teach about the history of Stratford. To accomplish this takes a lot of people, a lot of effort and a lot of time. What we hope to accomplish is well worth the effort. If any of you reading this would like to contribute, you are more than welcome to join us. All you have to do is let the Historical Society know of your interest.



**Bond's Dock - A sketch rendered b/y Robert H. Treat, local artist, from a collection of his works recently donaed to the Society by his children, Robert L. Treat and Patricia Treat Evans.**

**Robert H. Treat 1905? - 1964**

---

**Stratford Historical Society  
967 Academy Hill  
P.O.Box 382  
Stratford, CT 06615-0382**



**E-mail us at: [Judsonhousestfd@aol.com](mailto:Judsonhousestfd@aol.com)**

**Phone: (203) 378-0630 Fax: 203-378-2562**

**On the Web: [www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org)**

**Upcoming Events:** Call for Information

May 25      Mem. Day Services & Parade   - 10:30 am

xxxxxxx   - Governing Board Meeting   - 1pm

xxxxxxx   - General Membership Meeting - 7pm