

Stratford Historical Society

Update



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

VOLUME XX, ISSUE 3

JANUARY 2016

MARK THE DATES:

- January's General Membership Meeting: January 29th at 7:00 pm at Christ Church
- Historical Society Governing Board Meeting: Monday, February 29th at 1:00pm
- March's General Membership Meeting: March 18th at 7:00 pm
- May's General Membership Meeting: May 27th at 7:00 pm

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Dateline 1950	2
Stratford Theater 1951	2
Stratford's Winningest Coach	3
1982 Story Follow-up	4
Contract Plating	5
Docents Wanted	6

January's General Membership Meeting

January 29th, 7:00 pm, Christ Church

Drew Shuptar-Rayvis is an artist and living historian of mixed European and Native American descent. His ancestors were Pennsylvania Dutch, Welsh, Swiss, English, Ukrainian and Accomac (across the water people)/Pocomoke (dark water people) Native American (Virginia/Maryland Algonkian). Growing up in the southern foothills of the Berkshire Mountains in the hill town of Brookfield, Connecticut has given him, since the age of 6, a love for history. Drew's interests include Native American and colonial history along with the outdoors. The out-of-doors pervades strongly in his art and gives him strong ties to his own Native American heritage. His heritage has caused him to pursue his certificate in Archaeology from Norwalk Community College and his Bachelors in Anthropology from Western Connecticut State University.

Drew is also a locally well known living historian of Native American life in New England and the Northeast during the

17th and 18th century. This time period is when Native people, including his own family in Virginia and Maryland, were changing their ancestral ways and



Drew Shuptar-Rayvis

trying to maintain who they were through the strife, warfare and removal from their homelands. It was also a time when his European ancestors were adjusting and learning how to live in a new land.

In his programs, Drew addresses many of the life ways, social interactions, cultural life ways

and trade relations encountered by Eastern Native Americans and early European settlers. Drew brings in period items of daily life and trade and wears the traditional clothes of an Algonkian man of the late 17th and early 18th century.

Topics in Drew's lectures may include any of the following; seasonal life ways of Algonkian people of western Connecticut; European captivity among native Americans; trade relations between the English, Germans and French; the contrasts between the British colonies and the French colonies and their treatment of native people; the importance of Native Americans; and, the fur trade in early colonial America and Canada.

You may learn more about Drew from his Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/drew.shuptarrayvis>

The meeting is open to the Public. Refreshments will be served — Bring a Friend! Listen to WICC for weather cancellations.

You've Got E-mail!

Did you know you can now receive your Historical Society Newsletter electronically in your e-mail Inbox? Should you wish to receive a copy of your newsletter

through e-mail, please send a request, including your e-mail address, to newsletters@stratfordhistoricalsociety.info.



Dateline Stratford Dec. 1950 - Jan. 1951



Stratford's Joan Wallace, left, and Barbara Abernethy of Bridgeport, Raybestos Brakette stars in softball and basketball.



Beverly Hunziker, Stratford High Class of 1945 and Oberlin College graduate, appeared on the Arthur Godfrey show January 15, 1951.

December 3, 1950 - Raybestos Division of Raybestos-Manhattan has tripled its payroll to turn out a big \$5,000,000 defense order and to meet record-breaking demands from the automobile industry.

The war contract is for powered metal clutch plates for the Cadillac tank.

Vice Pres. R. B. Davis yesterday predicted 1951 will be a peak year for the 1,500 employees of the Stratford plant.

December 17, 1950 - Stratford school teachers are not giving in one inch on their demands for a 15% increase in salaries despite a Board of Education appeasement from 7½% to 10% in its recommendations to the Town Council.

Stratford's average teacher pay is up from the present average of \$3,200 to \$3,500.

December 24, 1950 - Credit Mike Kostic as the brain who made the Town Hall one of the best decorated buildings in the state.

Tony Delibro has decided that he wants to operate his used car business under the name Air-way Motor Sales instead of Strat Motors and will ask the Zoning Board for permission Jan. 5.



Charles Plumb of 788 Judson Place turned 80 December of 1950. Mr. Plumb was a seafood wholesaler and a good friend of Sen. Charles "Shang" Wheeler. Mr. Plumb passed away in November 1957. Seen here, his wife is with him.



Franklin School's girl scouts troop 89 are awarded a flag by the American Legion. Left to right are: Florence Pineau, Bobbie Sidoriak, Georgieann Porubsky, Elizabeth Repko, Marian Basile, Olga Bepko, Catherine Roddy, and Louise Smith.

January 7, 1951 - A stiff fight over whether or not Chief Bill Nichols gets a new police ambulance is in the offing with the \$6,000 price tag being the crux.

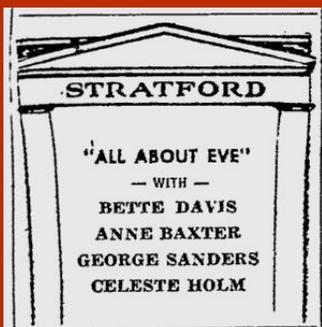
But before popping off, penny-wise citizens should remember that the present ambulance is 12 years old and is really a truck chassis with an ambulance body.

The heavy cost of the new junior high schools and the resultant high rise in the lax mill rate will probably cause the project to be shelved what with the scarcity of metals et al.

January 21, 1951 - Leasing of the huge former Chance Vought plant, Stratford, for airplane engine production employing 9,000 to 12,000 will be negotiated within a few days by Aviation Corp. of America, headed by industrial giant Victor Emanuel.

This happy culmination of the efforts of U. S. Sens. Brien McMahon and William Benton to re-tenant the Vought property and replace the thousands of workers taken from the area in 1948 was told to The Herald by most reliable sources last night.

Playing at the Stratford Theater 1950-51



December 3rd	All About Eve	Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, George Sanders
December 10th	American Guerilla in the Philippines	Tyrone Power, Micheline Prelle
December 17th	Never a Dull Moment	Irene Dunne, Fred MacMurray
December 24th	I'll Get By	June Haver, Gloria DeHaven, Dennis Day
December 31st	Right Cross	June Allyson, Dick Powell, Ricardo Montalban
January 7th	Where Danger Lives	Robert Mitchum, Claude Rains
January 14th	Pagan Love Song	Esther Williams, Howard Keel
January 21st	For Heaven's Sake	Clifton Webb, Joan Bennett, Edmund Gwenn
January 28th	Rio Grande	John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Harry Carey Jr.

Walt Czekaj, the winningest football coach in Stratford history.

**EXTRACTED from the
STRATFORD HIGH
SCHOOL BUILDING
RENOVATIONS SUB-
COMMITTEE REGULAR
MEETING AGENDA
January 14, 2015**

Walt Czekaj, the winningest football coach in Stratford history, died Monday night. He was 72.

During his 15-year tenure at Stratford, Czekaj went 117-44 and took the Red Devils to four state

championship games. Stratford, led by current coach Duane Shirden at tailback, won the 1988 Class SS championship with a 42-2 victory over Sacred Heart of Waterbury.

A graduate of Stratford and the University of Bridgeport, where he played quarterback and linebacker, Czekaj served as an assistant coach under McMahon's Jack Casagrande and Trumbull's Jerry McDougall. He also spent six years at Norwalk from 1977-1982 before returning to his alma mater for one year as an assistant under Vincent Lombardo.

Czekaj was also the first wrestling coach in Trumbull's history. He later coached Norwalk's wrestling team to two FCIAC championships and a state runner-up finish.

"He was number one, a premier teacher, a master coach as well, and one of the



Walter Czekaj -- Phys. Ed.
1976 Trumbull High School Yearbook

Bridgeport Gridders
Win Final Game 18-16



Knights Down Post;
Czekaj Stars



Walter Czekaj
Physical Education
1983 Norwalk High School Yearbook

warmest people I've ever met in my life," said McDougall, one of Czekaj's closest friends who hired him away from McMahon in 1968. "He loved what he did all of his life. He was a great peer example to the thousands of kids he touched both in physical education and in coaching."

Czekaj coached under McDougall for eight years and left for Norwalk after Trumbull's 29-7 loss to Fitch in the first CIAC Class LL state championship game in 1976.

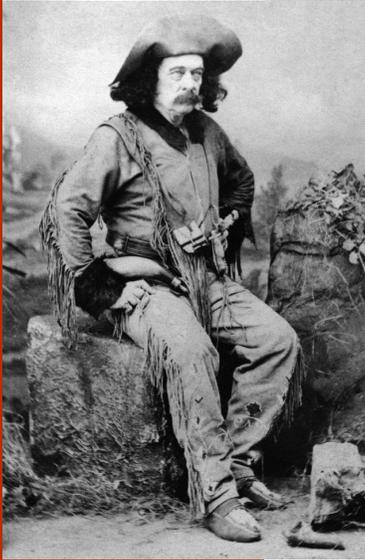
Czekaj was 16-39-1 at Norwalk. When hired at Stratford on July 17, 1984, the program had gone through two coaches in two years. Czekaj's goal was, "to get some continuity and stability into the program," Czekaj told the **Connecticut Post**. "The kids have gone through two coaches in two years, so hopefully I'll be there for a while."

Czekaj, who retired in 1998, after a 15-12 loss to Darien in the Class M semifinals, had recently been admitted to Bridgeport Hospital due to complications from a stroke. "I had very high respect for Walt," McDougall said. "Like many of the people that I came across in the teaching and coaching eras, I can say Walt Czekaj was at the top of the ladder. Loved him dearly as a friend and a confidant."

"I had very high respect for Walt...Loved him dearly as a friend and a confidant."

Jerry McDougall

From Our Newsletter Archives



Ned Buntline c. 1845

Ned Buntline's biography, *Life and Adventures of 'Ned Buntline'*, is available to read and/or download, at no cost, from Google Books at <https://books.google.com/books?id=wodIAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

As you may be aware, we have been busy scanning and uploading our newsletter archive to our website. You may view the newsletter archive at www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.info. In reviewing past newsletters, we found this interesting tidbit from the January 1982 newsletter.

SOMETHING FOR FUN - The following is taken from a clipping found at the Museum recently. The original is a Letter to the Editor of the Bridgeport Post.

BUFFALO BILL

"It might be of interest, that a Stratford man, O.E. Judson, of the Stratford clan, who brought Buffalo Bill to worldwide fame through his weekly stories in "Beadles Dime Novels" and "Half Dime Novels" in which Cody, sometimes in partnership with Wild Bill and Texas Jack, decimated red-skins and outlaws weekly in great numbers. Judson wrote under the name of Ned Buntline, and was far from the uncouth character the picture shows.

Judson was a Yale graduate who sent the clergy in an uproar against his dime novels, which, the clergy said, corrupted the youth of our nation.

However in none of Judson's writings can there be found any glorifying of the criminal set and nothing morally unclean; nor profanity so frequently found in many of the library books of today or the daily press.

His heroines did no strip-tease act, but when Bill was injured retired to the convenient sage bush, and modestly, blushing a fiery red, managed to provide him with the necessary bandages to bind his wounds ***** "

The letter is signed "OLD TIMER". We do not know when this was written or whether the facts are accurate, but it's fun to read. If you can add any information we'd be pleased to hear from you.

In no newsletter since January 1982 could we find any additional details or follow-up. So, never wishing to shrink from a challenge, we decided to search for what we could learn about "O. E. Judson."

We first located O.E. Judson. O.E. was born Orville Edwin Judson in 1817 in Southwick, Massachusetts. Orville never lived in Stratford, but his mother was born in Stratford and his father was born in Shelton.

We next consulted the Yale Directory of Graduates from 1780 to 1900. There was no O.E. or Orville Edwin Judson who graduated from Yale during the 19th century.

Next, we turned to Ned Buntline's story. Ned Buntline was the pen name for Edward Zane Carroll Judson. E.Z.C. Judson, as we was more commonly known, was born in 1823 in Stamford, New York. His parents, too, were born in New York.

When E.Z.C. Judson was 11 years old, he had a very severe falling out with his father. The falling out was so severe that E.Z.C. left home never to reconcile with his father.

At 11, E.Z.C. joined up with a sailing ship crew in New York City as a cabin boy and spent the next few years working sailing ships. During this period, E.Z.C. fought in the Seminole Wars and gained a reputation for fearlessness.

In 1838, E.Z.C. began writing newspaper articles about the slums in New York City. Ned moved on to Ohio and in 1846 adopted the pen name Ned Buntline which was taken from his experiences during his sailing days.

By 1849, Ned was back in New York City. Among his other adventures in the big city, *The New Hampshire*

Patriot and Gazette relates a story, in April 1849, of a brothel madame, Kate Hastings, who had the now "Ned Buntline" horsewhipped on Broadway for an undeclared offense.

Ned continued moving around, founded a newspaper in St. Louis, and in 1860, as the Civil War breaks out, joined the New York Mounted Rifles.

After the Civil War ends, Ned heads back West where he meets "Buffalo Bill". Ned maintains the claim, throughout his life, that it was he who so nicknamed Buffalo Bill.

Ned's brief meeting with Buffalo Bill, inspired him to write his first "dime novel." Ned would go on to dime novel fame as one of the most prolific writers of his age.

Due to his prolific writing, his time at sea, his pen name borrowed from his days at sea, and his adventurous life "out West", during Ned's lifetime, he was often compared to Mark Twain. Ned eventually retired to a large wooded property in the Catskills in New York. After the 1880's, Ned's fame evaporated.

Which brings us to the inevitable question: where did "Old Timer" obtain his flawed information? Ned Buntline was surely not O.E. Judson and as near as we can discover, Ned never set foot in the Town of Stratford or on the campus of Yale. As a matter of fact, Ned hated going to school and the Yale Directory of Graduates lists no E.Z.C. Judson.

We suspect "Old Timer" read Ned Buntline's novels as a boy and loved them. Further, "Old Timer" may have actually met O.E. Judson on a visit to Stratford during "Old Timer's" youth. Memory fades and "Old Timer" may have simply conflated the two Judsons.

Contract Plating Demolition began October 29, 2015

After having made no property tax payments in several years, the Town of Stratford foreclosed on the Contract Plating property and businesses March 1, 2013. The foreclosure opened the door to the property being cleared of its buildings and toxic waste stored on the property to be removed. So ends the sad history of a once great Stratford business.

Contract Plating opened for business in 1918 at 540 Longbrook Avenue. The Contract Plating site is 10.5 acres in size. Soon after the company began business, Raymond O'Connor, a Naugatuck native and metallurgist at Chase Brass Company in Waterbury, joined Contract Plating. Raymond immediately made an impact at Contract Plating and, in 1922 Raymond married Veronica O'Neill (Stratford) who was the daughter of Contract Plating's Manager.

Raymond held many positions at Contract Plating and was named Chairman of the Board in 1970. Raymond was not just a major influ-

ence on Contract Plating, he contributed his time, money and influence to the Town of Stratford. Contract Plating supported Little League teams, mens' and womens' athletic teams, church and community groups and, along with the Contract Plating employees, raised a great deal of money in support of United Way.

Raymond was named "Man of the Year" in 1952 by the Raymond Goldbach VFW and in 1964 Raymond was named Ringmaster of the Barnum Festival. Raymond was the first President of the Stratford Chamber of Commerce a position he held for five years. Raymond actively pursued the Theater Guild to help convince the Guild to locate the Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford. These are just a few of the ways Mr. O'Connor and his employees made the mark on the Town.

As a company, Contract Plating was a principal partner of Sikorsky Aircraft. In 1964, it was estimated that Contract Plating, along with



HARD WORKERS . . . Praised for their work in United Fund resuscitation at Contract Plating Company are L-R: John Bevoctus, purchasing agent; Jean Thompson, receiving and shipping clerk; and Peter Brady, plater.

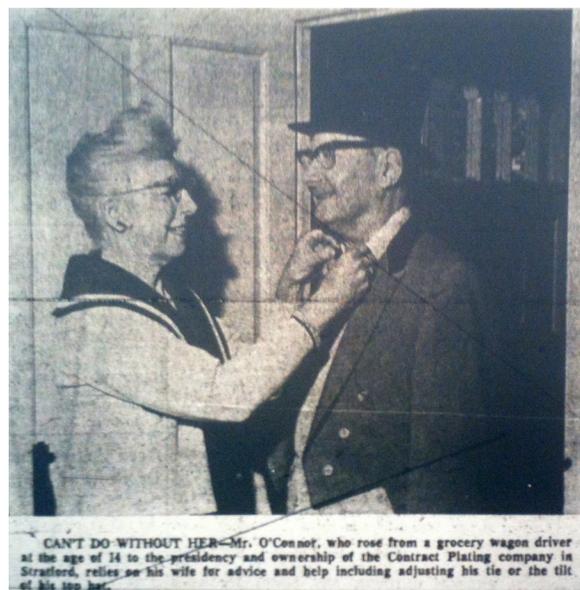
other plating companies in the Bridgeport area, contributed \$4 billion to the local economy.

Mr. O'Connor was remembered by many in 1973, at the time of his passing, for all he and Contract Plating had contributed to the Town. By the early 21st Century, Contract Plating was reduced to a shell of its former self and operated an over-the-road trucking business from 540 Longbrook Avenue.



SIKORSKY AIRCRAFT truck picks up and delivers parts every day at the Contract Plating Co., which does subcontracting work directly for Sikorsky Aircraft and on helicopter parts made by more than 50 other Sikorsky subcontractors. Contract Plating's plant is at 540 Longbrook Ave., Stratford.

Bridgeport Sunday Herald, July 22, 1956



CAN'T DO WITHOUT HER—Mr. O'Connor, who rose from a grocery wagon driver at the age of 14 to the presidency and ownership of the Contract Plating company in Stratford, relies on his wife for advice and help including adjusting his tie or the tilt of his top hat.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray O'Connor, July 14, 1964

Docents Wanted!

Docents are at the core of the school tours that the Stratford Historical Society provides for the third and fifth graders in town. Docents are those dedicated people who love children and history. They are people with time and a willingness to share their talents with others.

If you are one of these people please contact the Stratford Historical Society (203) 378-6830 to enroll for the Docent Training

Program held one morning a week for six weeks in February and March

from 9:00 to 11:00 beginning on Friday, February 19 (tentative date) to prepare for the Fifth Grade Revolutionary War tour in May, and one morning for two weeks in September for the Stratford Colonial Life tour for third graders in October.

Teaching children about their local history in an authentic eighteenth century setting enhances their appreciation for the town in which they live and gives them a sense of where their roots are.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

The Stratford Historical Society
Friend of Education
invites you to join
THE DOCENT TEAM

If you like to work with children
If you want to teach them about local history
If you have a few hours to perform
a real community service by conducting school tours

DOCENT TRAINING CLASSES
in February and March 6 sessions
In September 2 sessions
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Judson House & Museum, 967 Academy Hill, Stratford 06615

Please call
Dolores Hoyer (203) 378-6842 or Judson House (203) 378-0630



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The best we can do about the past is to
keep the memories alive!

www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org