



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

Stratford Historical Society UPDATE

VOLUME XXII, ISSUE 4

MARCH 2018

MARK THE DATES:

- March's General Membership Meeting: Sunday, March 25th at 2:00 pm at the Stratford Library
- Governing Board Meeting, Monday, April 30th at 1 pm.
- May's General Membership Meeting: Sunday, May 20th at 2:00 pm at the Stratford Library

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March's General Membership Meeting

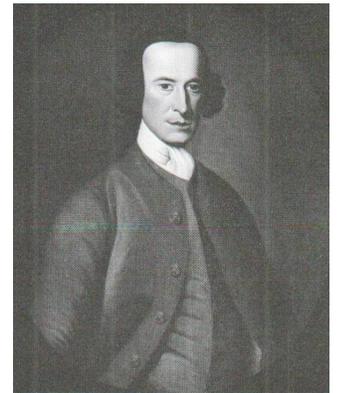
March 25th, 2:00 pm, Stratford Library Lovell Room, 2203 Main Street



Ray Vermette

All meetings are free and open to the general public. Please bring a friend! Donations are gratefully accepted.

Our speaker for March's meeting will be Ray Vermette. Ray will be speaking on the life of William Samuel Johnson. Ray is the President of the Oronoque Village Association, and an Historical Society Docent. Ray has addressed our Society in the past on such Stratford luminaries as General David Wooster as well as William Samuel Johnson. Ray has a strong interest in Stratford's history. William Samuel Johnson, a Stratford native, was a selectman of Stratford, representative to the General Assembly in Hartford, editor of the Articles of Confederation in Philadelphia, and President of Columbia University.



William Samuel Johnson as a younger man c 1770. Painting replica from "In Pursuit of Paradise".

—◆—
"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there".
The opening line of L.P. Hartley's 1953 book *The Go-Between*.
—◆—

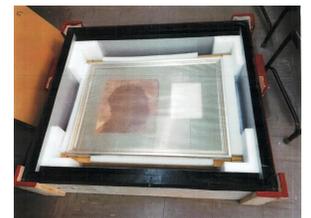
Miss Flora Goes to Washington

Sometime prior to 1921, a silhouette was found in a drawer in the slave quarters of the Judson House. The silhouette had an accompanying bill of sale dated 1796 for a slave woman named "Flora." The silhouette and bill of sale were framed and preserved, as best as possible, by the Society, and hung for display in the Judson House. Flora's silhouette is unique in that it is the only slave silhouette of this size and type known to exist.

Flora's silhouette has appeared in books and TV programs over the ensuing years because of its unique status as being one-of-a-kind. The Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., at some point, became aware of Flora's unique silhouette.

The Smithsonian approached the Historical Society in 2017 with an offer to restore the silhouette and bill of sale, and to display the silhouette, for a period of time, at the Smithsonian in Washington. A contract was negotiated between the Society and the Smithsonian to meet the objectives of restoration of the silhouette, and temporary display of Flora's silhouette in Washington, D.C.

The silhouette was evaluated by Smithsonian personnel, then carefully packaged for shipment to Washington, D. C. Following the restoration process, Flora's silhouette will be on display in Washington. As we have additional information on Flora's silhouette's journey, we will share same here in the *UPDATE*.



Flora's silhouette being prepared for transport and restoration at the Smithsonian.



President's Message



Dennis Brunelle, President

Stratford Historical Society Members and Friends

Our March 2018 Membership meeting promises to be an interesting as well as informative presentation from the Sikorsky Archives by Dan Libertino.

As always, the program is open to Stratford Historical

Society (SHS) members as well as the general public.

The SHS has applied for two (2) grants to further the preservation and educational goals of the society. Hopefully these monies also will expand the image of the SHS within the community and beyond.

We also continue to explore the possibility of an SHS Artisan Craft Show in September 2018.

The society is beginning to plan new museum exhibitions for this summer to display some of our never before seen treasures.



Georgene with some of her artwork on display at the Stratford Library.

Artwork by Georgene Fasanelle

By Georgene Fasanelle

At Housatonic Community College I studied sculpture, acrylic, watercolor and pastel painting, digital photography and Photoshop.

I am presently taking watercolor classes at Beach Gallery in Milford, and drawing classes at Stratford Continuing Ed.

Some of my favorite pieces are: the "Horse" which is my first and only oil painting, the

"Indian Chief" which is a soft pastel, "Love and Peace" which is a foam core sculpture, "JoAnn" which is a portrait of my daughter-in-law who passed away, and "Matt" which is a portrait of my late husband.

I had never painted before. When I retired, by the encouragement of my husband and sons, also artists, I took art lessons at Housatonic Com-

munity College. I found that I had a passion for creating art. I really enjoyed it, and it does relax me. I had spent 53 years in the accounting field, so I decided I was going to go college for something different.

Now I am studying Creative Writing at Housatonic. Perhaps some day I can incorporate the two.

Electronically Yours

By Dolores Hocter

The Stratford Historical Society has entered the electronic age. Recently volunteers entered over 150 e-mail addresses into the computer to expedite communication with members to make them more aware of what the Society has been doing, and to en-

courage them to take a more active part in the organization.

This will also enable the Society to send the **UPDATE**, our bi-monthly newsletter, to you electronically. The purpose for doing this is to save the Society expense incurred with printing and mailing.

Please contact the Society at

judsonhousestfd@aol.com if you have not yet submitted your e-mail address, or if you would like your newsletter delivered via e-mail. You will receive your **UPDATE** much faster, and you will receive additional pages of delightful reading in our expanded electronic edition.



A Weaving Bee

By Dolores Hocter

The Education Committee at SHS recently engaged the Sewing Bees for a bit of weaving. Several ladies met for three Tuesday mornings in February to prepare a weaving experience for third graders who tour the House to learn about how life was lived in Colonial Times.

Sitting both ends of small

corrugated cardboard looms and notching both ends of small cardboard shuttles; warping the looms and winding the shuttles; beginning the weaving on each one, packing it in a plastic bag and bundling enough packages for one of the 27 classes amounted to approximately 500 projects prepared by the ladies.

Weaving was an important

skill learned by colonial girls as well as boys. In early colonial times cloth woven at home provided a family with clothing and bed linens. Later men set up shops and became the professionals of the weaving industry.

The weaving exercise helps children develop skills requiring dexterity, concentration and patience.



Dateline Stratford February - March 1953

The Stratford News
February 5, 1953

Town Reconstructing Road That Was Just Constructed

The Town of Stratford is reconstructing Lincoln avenue, lead-in road to the Wooster Junior High school, the Stratford NEWS learned today.

The town will spend in the neighborhood of \$2,000 for the reconstruction. It has been working on the construction for more than two weeks. And it won't finish the job for another week to 10 days.

The 11,040 feet on Lincoln avenue, and 980 feet on Freeman avenue were let on contract to be graded.

The cost of the project was \$17,000. According to town officials, this has already been paid...

The Stratford News
February 5, 1953

Beach Development Is Urged By Army Corps of Engineers

The Corps of Engineers of the United States Army has recommended that "local interests consider adoption of a project for protection of Short Beach, Stratford."

The recommendation notes that "adoption of a Federal project for Short Beach is not warranted in view of the limited public benefit, other than recreational."

In other words, the Federal government won't pay for the working out of the plans, and Stratford should, if it has the money...

Sunday Herald
February 15, 1953

School Crisis In Stratford: Cut to Stand?

A stunned Stratford Board of Education girded yesterday for a possible fight to the finish with the

Town Council.

A highly placed educational official who asked that he not be quoted told the Herald:

"Stratford schools cannot possibly be operated as they should be and as Stratford parents want them to be if the Board of Education's budget is cut by \$200,000.

"If such a cut is made, the board would have to operate the schools at a deficit. We have a state-given duty to the townspeople to give adequate education to our children."...

Sunday Herald
March 1, 1953

Stratford's Tax Rate Still Nutmeg Topper

The town of Stratford, which was 14th highest-taxed town in the state two years ago, and 8th on the list last year, is expected to be among the toppers this year with its new rate of 44.4 mills, The Herald learned this week.

In 1951, citizens of Stratford paid 38.2 mills in taxation. That put it slightly behind Hartford's 38.25, New London's 38.4, and several other cities and towns with tax rates of 39 and 40 mills.

Last year Stratford's boost to 41.7 sent it soaring up the top of the list.

The complete returns are not yet in for 1953, but when they are, Stratford is expected to be up there with the leaders.

Sunday Herald
March 22, 1953

Johnson School Opens to Stratford April 1

The second of Stratford's two new junior high schools, Samuel Johnson School in the South End,

will open at 9 A.M. April 1. Students in the seventh and eighth grades from Birdseye, Center, Honeyspot and Lordship schools will occupy the new building and as an emergency measure, due to overcrowded conditions at Lordship, grades five and six from the school will also shift to Johnson.

...Albert S. Morris, principal, has called two preliminary staff meetings for teachers moving to Johnson, on March 23 and 30 at 3:30 P.M. These instructors include Alvin Gendal, Harriet Fennell, Eleanor Pferskik and Mrs. Jean Sullivan, from Birdseye; Mrs. Violet Lombardo and Anthony Deaso, Center; Joseph Kochiss, Honeyspot, and Dorothea Adamchak, Mrs. Doris Katz and three elementary teachers, from Lordship.

The Stratford News
March 26, 1953

Historical Society Will Meet Friday

The regular bi-monthly meeting of the Stratford Historical Society will be held on Friday, March 27, in the Boothe Memorial Park.

Harold M. Sturges will preside at the business meeting. Program Chairman Robert P. Shelton has announced that Mr. and Mrs. James McKeen of Stratford will be the guest speakers. They will talk on "History of Connecticut Rocks." The couple are regarded as outstanding collectors of minerals.

A social hour will follow the program. Mrs. Stanley Johnson, Hospitality chairman, has announced that the hostesses for the evening will be Mrs. Robert Scott, chairman, assisted by Mrs. Rexford Nettleton and Miss Ruby Steele.



Patty Grady, Fred Rottjer and Doris Sutton of the Red Cross. Photo from the **Sunday Herald**, March 8, 1953.



Franklin School Library re-opens having been closed since September. Photo from **The Stratford News**, February 5, 1953.



Thomas F. Donahue, principal of Wooster Junior High, and Jackie and Judy, 8th graders. Photo from **The Stratford News**, February 12, 1953.



Stratford Theater from the 1944 Stratford High School **Log**

Now Showing February - March 1953

February 1st	Ruby Gentry	Jennifer Jones, Charlton Heston, Karl Malden
February 8th	Road to Bali	Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour
February 15th	Above and Beyond	Robert Taylor, Eleanor Parker
February 22nd	Treasure of Golden Condor	Cornel Wilde, Constance Smith
March 1st	The Stooge	Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis
March 8th	Mississippi Gambler	Tyrone Power, Piper Laurie
March 15th	I Confess	Anne Baxter, Montgomery Clift
March 22nd	The Star	Bette Davis, Sterling Hayden
March 29th	City Beneath Sea	Robert Ryan, Mala Powers, Anthony Quinn

Judson Brothers' Store Burns

"Will the milkman, the meatman, the storeman, the breadman, the expressman, and every other man who drives a team keep off from the lawns and keep in the traveled patch during these coming weeks when it is a temptation to drive as near the sidewalk as possible? This is a practical part of village improvement and will help to keep good-natured those who try to have a smooth lawn in front of their homes".

The Bridgeport Daily Standard, February 13, 1893

Stiles Judson, Sr., father of Stiles Judson, Jr, state prosecutor and politician in the late 1800s, and Alice Judson, was born in Stratford about 1827,

Bridgeport Daily Standard

February 4, 1868

FIRE IN STRATFORD

This morning about half-past seven o'clock, the Grocery store and Barn, owned and occupied by George T. & Stiles Judson, and situated on the upper green (today known as Paradise Green), in this place, was discovered to be on fire, and in a short time was entirely consumed, together with a large

stock of groceries, hay, grain, &c. A fire had been kindled in the stove which was an air-tight one, about six o'clock in the morning, and while the family of Mr. J. was at breakfast the store took fire, and had got under such headway before discovered, that it was impossible to get it under. The carriages, wagons, sleighs, &c., were run out and saved. The building was a large one nearly new, and about one-half of it had been finished off, and was used as a store. The stock of groceries and small ware, to which about five hundred dollars (approximately \$8,370 in 2018

dollars) worth had been added within a few days, was entirely lost. A policy of one thousand dollars had been effected on the stock in the "Home" of New Haven, last week. Messrs. Judson estimate their loss at four thousand dollars (approximately \$67,000 in 2018 dollars). The books of the concern had been moved from the house to the store in the morning, and were destroyed. Had the wind been blowing at the time no doubt the dwelling houses near by would have been burned also.

Fire Department History

The Stratford News

February 5, 1953

Fire Department Started with 50 Rubber Buckets

The Stratford Fire Department was first organized in the fall of 1873 and was known as the Mutual Hook & Ladder Company, as a volunteer Fire Department of the Town of Stratford.

It was organized by 15 men of high standing in the Town. Their first meeting place was in the basement of the Old Town Hall and at that time the Old Town Hall was in the rear of the Congregational Church and stood where Packard Hall now stands.

They purchased, by public subscription, a ladder truck that was pulled by hand and could be pulled from either end. It was equipped with ladders of all sizes and was a very heavy piece of equipment, being about 4 foot wide and about 60 foot long all

in one piece. It was also equipped with 50 rubber buckets that hung on a rope along the sides.

The same meeting place was used up to 1896, when the Selectmen were prevailed upon to build new quarters for them. They appointed a three man committee to find a new place and to see what could be done about it. William Fryer, Alfred Wakelee and Allen Judson were the men appointed to the committee. They finally decided on the building that was built in the Center at a cost of \$1,200.00.

When that building was complete, a ladder truck was purchased that was equipped with up to date ladders, hooks, axes, etc. It also had a pump that could be put over a well and pumped by hand through 1½ inch hose, as there was no city water. This truck was also

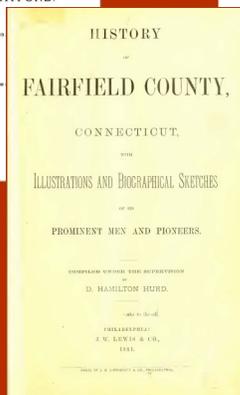
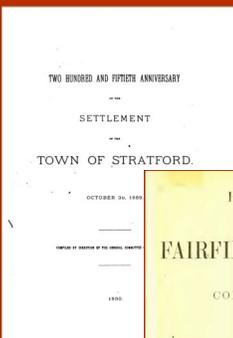
drawn by hand. After that the Town purchased a hand drawn chemical with 2-35 gallon chemical tanks so as to have two pieces of apparatus. This did not workout so good, and another company was formed and called the Chemical Company.

Now having two companies, when a fire call was received, both companies would respond and when they got to the fire all they did was fight about not letting one company use the ladders or the other company use the chemical and the place would burn down. So in 1908, after a lot of places had burned down, the Underwriters ordered something to be done about the loss, or the insurance rates would go up.

In Feb. 1909 they appointed Allen Judson Chief of the Fire Department with instructions to take entire charge...



Mutual Hook & Ladder Company about 1890.



Books of Note

The internet has brought us the ability to not only search for reams of information, but, also, to download many of those reams at no cost. Such is the case with two wonderful books on Stratford's history.

The first is the **Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Settlement of the Town of Stratford** published in 1890. This volume is a keepsake for anyone interest-

ed in Stratford's history. The book was lovingly created by the town's 250th anniversary committee and contains photos and many of the quaint tales of Stratford's past. Feelings from the 19th century concerning Stratford witch Goody Bassett are notably documented in this volume.

The second is the **History of Fairfield County, With Illustrations and Biographical**

Sketches of the prominent Men and Pioneers published in 1889. The 250th anniversary committee cited this book as one which had all Stratford residents abuzz. It's the one place where you will find a complete list of all Stratford's selectmen and first selectmen from the first through 1889.

Both books may be downloaded from Google books at <https://play.google.com/store/books>.

Remembering Frederick Sedgewick

On March 15th, 1893 Frederick Sedgewick, long-time principal of Stratford Academy passed away in Sharon, Connecticut. Mr. Sedgewick moved to Sharon in his twilight years for health reasons. He was well remembered and well loved throughout Connecticut, but, most especially, in the Town of Stratford where he was responsible for the education of over 1,000 students during his tenure as Principal.

Mr. Sedgewick was active in the town not just as an educator, but also as an active member of the Stratford community. He loved sailing his yacht, the Swan, along Stratford's coast. He was active in Stratford's First Congregational

Church. The Stratford Academy stood near the Civil War Monument on Academy Hill and was closed when the Stratford Graded School (Center School) opened.

History of Fairfield County, Connecticut, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers, 1881, page 768

The Stratford Academy was founded in 1805, and in the following year received its charter from the Legislature of Connecticut. It soon won and has since uniformly maintained a high stand as an English and classical school, making little display of superficial knowledge and partially learned accomplishments, but furnishing a

solid basis of education, and from year to year sending its pupils to take the highest rank in the best colleges in our land, and to fill places of honor and trust in the largest cities. Never has its reputation as an institution of learning been higher or better sustained than during the quarter of a century which has elapsed since, in 1847, Mr. Frederick Sedgewick, A.M., entered upon the duties and responsibilities of its management. He re-signed as principal of the institution in 1872, and has since conducted a select school. Mr. Sedgewick has been, and still is, a very successful teacher, and during the years he officiated as principal of the academy more than one thousand pupils received instruction at that institution.



Frederick Sedgewick from *In Pursuit of Paradise*



I. J. Booth, Esq. has been reformed out of the Stratford Post Office, and David Brooks, Esq. the former Loco Foco incumbent re-instated.

The preceding brief paragraph from the **Hartford Daily Courant** in 1843 must be one of the most understated newspaper paragraphs of all time. In none of the many Stratford histories is any mention made of any interruption in Mr. Brook's service as Stratford's Postmaster.

On December 13, 1803 David Brooks was appointed Stratford's third postmaster. He remained as postmaster until 1857. He also served as Town Clerk from 1827 until 1835.

A quick check of the [Official Register of the United States](#)

indisputably confirms that David Brooks was replaced by I. J. Booth as postmaster from October 1841 through February 1843.

Postmaster appointments came from Washington D.C. Vice President John Tyler, a Whig, succeeded President Harrison upon Harrison's death in April 1841. Tyler appointed Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky as Postmaster General on September 13, 1841.

The Loco Foco movement supported Andrew Jackson and Van Buren (Democrat and Tyler predecessor), and were for free trade, greater circulation of specie, legal protections for labor unions and against paper money, finan-

cial speculation, and state banks. The Loco Focos were affiliated with the Democratic Party. Apparently, David Brooks subscribed to the Loco Foco movement which, likely, ran afoul of his Whig Washington superior, Mr. Wickliffe.

Why I. J. Booth's time in office was so brief is unknown. According to the 1843 **Courant** article, Mr. Booth was "reformed out" as postmaster. It's possible Mr. Booth was not particularly effective in his new postmaster position. Furthermore, the Loco Foco movement was passing into history by 1843. It's possible Mr. Wickliffe was able to overlook David Brooks' past political affiliations to restore order to the Stratford Post Office.



David Brooks' store and post office as rendered by Edward Henry Lamson in the mid-1800s.

This black and white copy is taken from "*In Pursuit of Paradise*" page 135.

July History Camps

History Camp..... July 9-13, 2018, 9:00-12:30.

"Stepping Back Through Time"

What was life like during the 1700's? The camp program portrays home life during colonial days. Butter making, candle dipping, weaving, school work with quill pens, and Native American study are only a few of the topics and activities included in the program. Learn about early Stratford history with a walking tour of the town to see historical sights.

FOR STUDENTS: Elementary (entering 4th-6th grade) Middle and High School. Campers are

grouped according to age. For non-members one adult membership of \$20 to the Stratford Historical Society is required and there are benefits with membership.

Applications can be printed from our website at stratfordhistoricalsociety.org or call the society 203-378-0630.

History Camp...July 23-27 9:00-12:00.

Exploring Historical Topics

Cost \$150 and for non members a membership also for \$20.

For 5th grade through High School. Campers divided by age groups.

TOPICS:

1. Early Mountain Men and Trappers in the west.
2. Pioneers and western expansion.
3. Ben Franklin and his inventions, we will be trying a few of them!
4. Superstitions, myths and origins of words and sayings we still use.
5. Walking Tour of the Town- Seeing sites of interest, hear tales and legends.

Game after the walk, break into three teams and be the first team to score the most points on questions about our town.

Applications can be printed at stratfordhistoricalsociety.org.



A Valuable Old Paper



TOM THUMB'S HOUSE, which he built after visiting Queen Victoria, is being torn down for parking area. It's 956 North, Av. (Bridgeport), where he brought his bride Lavinia Warren. Photo from the *Sunday Herald*, February 15, 1953.



LIKE A KING P.T.'s wedding gift to Tom was this carriage with two ponies. That's Tom in the driver's seat with his little dog Alex. Large with pride are Thumb's friends in the foreground. This picture is the property of David Cable of Milford. Photo from the *Sunday Herald*, February 15, 1953.



Harry Flood, in his office at Town Hall, buys the first ticket to the Stratford High band concert to be held at Klein Memorial on March 22, 1953 from Carol Walz. Photo from the *Sunday Herald*, March 1, 1953.

The Newtown Bee February 3, 1893 STRATFORD.

Mrs. Mary Wood of North avenue, a descendant of the Lewis family, who have for nearly a century been identified with the history of Old Mill Hill, has presented to the historical society of Fairfield county, through E. R. Silliman, a number of valuable relics which have been in the possession of the family for many years. Among them are two copies of the American Telegraph, bearing dates of March 10 and April 17, 1800, published at Newfield, now Bridgeport, and printed by Lazarus Beach, near the bridge. There are quite a number of advertisements from the different towns in the county and several from Stratford. John Hubbell, administrator, advertises his appointment on the estate of Benjamin Hubbell of Stratford. A silver watch is advertised as being found on the road between Stratford and Newfield. V. Wetmore, Postmaster, advertises the following list of letters, as being in the office April 1, 1800:

David Butler, Huntington
Philo Hawley, Huntington
Samuel Edwards, Trumbull
John Fowler, Trumbull
Judson Curtis, Stratford

David Curtis, Stratford
Thomas Dearborn, Stratford
Daniel Lewis, Stratford
Dock Collins, Stratford
Mary Beardslee, Stratford
John Thompson and Ephraim Beardslee advertise their appointment as commissioners on the estate of William Edwards, late of Stratford. Victory Wetmore, advertises Dr. Lee's patent New London bilious pills. The latest news from London brought by the British packet, Earl of Gower, bears date of February 6, two months before the date of publication of the paper. A part of one column is devoted to mathematical questions and answers. One advertisement reads as follows: Wood wanted by the printer. "Those who have promised it by a certain day, had best bring it." The death at Kent, Ct., of Peter Pratt, aged 65 is announced, a graduate from Yale college in 1762. Also the death at Danbury, CT., of David Hoyt aged 90 years. Philo Lyon of Newfield, advertises salt, rum and sugar, for sale for cash, short credit or his own notes; his own notes to have the preference. David Hinman advertises the loss of a small leather bag, containing money on the road between Stratford and Brookfield. Robert Walker,

town clerk, advertises a "report of a meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Stratford, legally assembled in town meeting, the 23rd of December, 1799." The object of the meeting was to protect the clam and oyster fisheries. A committee was appointed consisting of Abijah McEwen, Esq., Phineas Blackman, John Selby, Silas Curtis, Amos Hubbell, Lewis L. Cannon, George Lewis, Jabez Curtis, Ebenezer Howes and Joel Curtis, to look after the interests of the town. Descendants of all these old-time residents, or of most of them, are in town to-day, and it must be interesting to them to have the names of their ancestors once more recalled to public notice. No doubt there can be found in many a garret, old documents, which have not seen the light of day for many a years, which would prove as interesting reading as these copies of an old time newspaper. If they could be hunted up, and placed in the hands of the historical society, where they would be carefully preserved and treasured, coming generations would have abundant opportunity for obtaining knowledge of the early history of their ancestors.

Manager-Council Form Obsolete?

Sunday Herald
March 1, 1953

Crisis in Stratford: Manager Going Out?

The council-town manager form of government may be on its way out in Stratford.

There is growing sentiment that the community is getting too big to be a town, and too complicated to have a town manager and a town council.

The reasons in back of this growing sentiment add up to these:

1. Stratford's rising tax-rate. It is going up to 44.4 mills this year, compared to the current 41.7 mills. The difference in the figures doesn't tell the story, however.

The town council really tightened Stratford's belt to come up with that figure, and

belted around the proposed budget of the Board of Education to compensate for an original under-estimation of the necessary expenditures of the other town departments...

2. Industry is getting fidgety. The big companies, such as Raybestos and Manning, Maxwell and Moore, hesitate to stick their noses into governmental affairs, but they're worried. They're wondering if maybe the town hasn't outgrown the great experiment.

3. The board of Education business: At the moment, Stratford is one of six towns in the state with an appointed board...

4. Harry Flood is one of the best-loved men in town. And a good town manager. But those who are critical of Flood

forget that town charter-wise he has as much power as a television set after an ice storm.

The way the charter works, it seems to put all responsibility in the town manager's lap, and all the power in the council. Some of the members continually hold over Flood's head the interesting but hardly amazing fact that they are elected, but he is only appointed.

5. The Big Circle of Buck Passers, Planning Division: One wag contends that there is more talk of planning, and less planning, in Stratford than in any town of comparable size this side of Las Vegas...

6. This is a honey: Stratford is run by a boss, it's whispered. And the boss does not work through the town Manager...

Selectman Manages Coal Company

Bridgeport Daily Standard
February 13, 1893

There have been important changes made recently in the People's Coal company, and Selectman William Blamey takes charge of the Stratford yard today. In an interview Saturday, evening a member of the firm said that this company was organized under the laws of the

state of Connecticut with a capital of \$10,000 for the purpose of doing business in Stratford. The principal stockholders were Nathan A. Hull, Isaac N. Hull and Julian A. Birge of Bridgeport. Two yards were eventually opened, one here and one in Milford. Captain Nathan Hull, who owns a barge, freighted most of the coal for both yards.

A short time ago an expert accountant who was employed to examine the books of the company discovered discrepancies in the accounts kept at the Stratford yard which showed a very serious deficit and were in such a confused condition that two experts who have been working on them have been unable to ascertain the true

financial condition of the company. The company has now been reorganized and the capital will be increased from \$10,000 to \$12,000. Selectman William Blamey will conduct the business of the Stratford yard hereafter.

Honor Roll Board For Stratford Soldier Boys



Sunday Herald
March 31, 1918

Stratford's honor roll of her boys now serving in the war is something of which the town should feel proud. There are many such honor rolls in the

various towns of the state, but none surpass and few equal the artistic beauty of this big board right in the center of the town on which are painted the names of the Stratford heroes.

While the honor roll shows

very well in the day time it is at night when the board is lighted up that it shows at its best. It is a picture not to be forgotten. It actually makes one feel patriotic to look at it.

Frank Abercrombie, the

painter, is responsible for turning out this beautiful piece of work. Mr. Abercrombie is a citizen of Stratford and he took special pride in giving to the town an honor roll board that beats them all.

Stratford Mother Killed by Gas Accident

Bridgeport Evening Farmer
February 15, 1918

25 CENT GAS METER IN STRATFORD KILLS WOMAN

MRS. HUTCHINSON IS FOUND DEAD IN BED TODAY BY MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD—GAS JET IN HER ROOM LEFT BURNING LAST NIGHT.

Mrs. Rose Z. Hutchinson, 49 years old, of 38 Sachs street, Stratford, was found dead in her bed by members of the household early today, a victim of a 25 cent slot gas meter, with which the house is equipped for heating.

Dr. Cogswell, medical examin-

er, pronounces death due to accidental poisoning.

Mrs. Hutchinson resides with her husband, an employe [sic] of the Remington Arms Co. at the Sachs street address. The house is equipped with gas only for heating, and there was a gas heater in the room occupied by Mrs. Hutchinson, fed by a quarter in the slot gas meter. It is believed that when Mrs. Hutchinson retired last night she left the heater burning.

During the night the gas supply ran low, and the heater was extinguished. Not knowing it had been lighted in Mrs.

Hutchinson's room, some other member of the household dropped a coin in the meter, replenishing the flow of gas.

Mrs. Hutchinson failed to arise at the usual time, members of the household detected the smell of gas coming from her room, and the woman dead or unconscious in bed. Medical attendance summoned was too late to be of assistance. Mrs. Hutchinson having already succumbed to the noxious fumes.

The Hutchinsons recently came to Stratford and but little is known of them by the neighbors.

The Way They Used to Do It.

Capt Charles Plumb

has a bill of sale of a negro boy named Stephen, for the sum of 160 pounds, from one Nathan

Sutliff of Haddam, to Joseph

Curtis of Stratford, bearing date of December 29, 1738.

The witnesses were Merrick Merwin and Robert Fairchild.

Newtown Bee

March 10, 1893

Rev. Kennedy Somewhere in France

Sunday Herald

March 31, 1918

Chaplain Kennedy of Stratford Writes of Life Somewhere in France

Rev. Chauncey Clark Kennedy who was pastor of the Stratford Episcopal church until he got a leave of absence to join the United forces as chaplain, writes home to Mrs. Kennedy some very interesting letters of life in France. Following is an extract from one of his letters:

"Let me try to give you a little picture of a ride I took last Saturday. It is snowing hard, as it has been for two days, a nasty sleety snow, but there isn't much on the ground, because it partially melts, and is churned up into a muddy slush nearly knee-deep on the roads we have to travel. The engine is running badly, so we stop a half kilometer from camp and get out to fix it with the sleet running down our necks. A long French wagon train passes us, the driver's hands blue with cold, for few of the French have gloves. Finally we go on into the driving sleet, past many wagon trains, coming and going.

"A troop of cavalry passes us, bending forward against the storm. We pull through a narrow street in a town lined with transport trucks, a few ragged children, and old men and old women, soldiers billeted everywhere, in stables, and outhouses, manure piled in the streets. Most of the better houses are shuttered and somewhat battered, dirty and unkempt. Then on we go in the storm until, at a turn in the road, we have to stop because a long artillery train is turning into the road, headed for the front - Americans, steel helmets and gas masks at their sides; officers mounted, men swaying on the caissons, faces pinched with cold, hands numb, going up for a night with the Boches. Not much parade about this, just cold, soggy discomfort and grim determination.

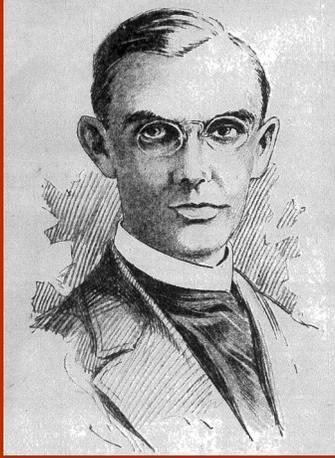
"Finally, after we have crept behind them for a time they turn off on a wood road going towards the front, and we hurry on past more billets, artillery stores, trenches, and wire of the reserve line to the little town where our post office is. Here is much more

mud, many barracks, and ceaseless activity. Having attended to our business we turn towards home by a longer but quicker route further back.

"It is getting dark, but we can still make out the forms of troops plodding along, the dark shape of transports, and here and there by the flash of a lantern we are able to distinguish the color of a uniform. The car is filling with snow, as the windshield has to be open in order that the driver may see. Every now and then we fetch up with a sharp jerk, as the French have a most disconcerting habit of not getting out of the way. On into the gathering dusk, picking our way, as we have only feeble oil lights.

"We reach home stiff with cold and soaking wet, but in time for a quick change and dinner; then around a warm wood fire in the stove we forget our small discomforts.

"We have inaugurated a formal dinner at 6:30, with courses, courtesy and the like for we have to have some return to civilization once a day. Shop talk is forbidden, and from 6:30 to 8 we play at being real gentlemen in a real club."



Rev. Chauncey Clark Kennedy from the March 31, 1918 *Sunday Herald*.



Steam crane on railroad tracks at the Dam site c 1918. Photo from John Babina's personal collection.



Stevenson Dam construction site c 1918. Photo from John Babina's personal collection.

Towns to be wiped out by dam

Sunday Herald

February 3, 1918

Several Towns to be Wiped Out to Make Way for Big Water Co.

Church and Cemetery Must Go.

(Special to The Herald)

DERBY, CONN., Feb. 2. - People in Oxford and Stevenson are much wrought up over the announced plans of the Housatonic Power company, which has in the works the construction of a huge dam near Zoar bridge, eight miles above Derby, and which contemplate the flooding of the valley for miles around. The people are protesting because the present plans would wipe out the settlement just above Zoar bridge together with the church edifice located there and would inundate the cemetery which is one of the most historic and one of the oldest

in the valley.

The gigantic plans of the Power company were not revealed until recently when it came out that it is the purpose to build a dam just below the present location of Zoar bridge, some eighty feet high in order to harness the waters of the river. Over a hundred men are now engaged on the job and it is expected that by summer fully 1,000 will be employed by the corporation which is said to have the backing of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad company as well as the Pennsylvania Railroad company.

...It is supposed, according to plans, that the water surface to be held in check by the huge dam will cover at least twenty-five square miles taking in the spillway below Zoar bridge and extending back into the country for some ten to fifteen

miles, flooding portions of the four towns of Southbury, Monroe, Newtown and Oxford, along the Housatonic river bank, and which is a road in the care of the state highway department, and will also wipe out many farms and historic places along the road.

In addition to the cemetery at Oxford, the quaint old burying place just below Stevenson will, after plans have been completed and it is expected that the job will take from two to four years, be under water. In this cemetery rest the bones of many of the pioneer residents of the section. Other places that will suffer a similar fate are the present church building in Oxford, the Oxford district school and summer camps without number. It will mean that the river will be unnavigable after passing Otter Rock...

German aliens must register

Bridgeport Telegram

February 5, 1918

Register Germans.

The registering of all the German aliens residing in Stratford began yesterday and will continue all the rest of this week.

Each and every male German over 14 years of age living in the town unless fully naturalized as an American citizen must present himself to Chief of Police William B. Nichols sometime this week. Each German alien

will be required to furnish four unmounted photographs of himself, not larger than three by three inches, on thin paper, with a light background. The finger prints of each will be taken also.



Stratford Children Doing Their War Bit "Snipping" For the Red Cross Society
Junior Red Cross members at work in Town Hall. Photo from the **Sunday Herald**, March 10, 1918.

Oronoque News

The Newtown Bee

March 3, 1893

Stratford. Oronoque.

George H. Tomlinson and sons are drawing a large lot of chestnut timber to the river, whence it will be floated to Bridgeport in the spring.

Mrs. Frank Blakeman has a number of eggs set, preparing for early spring broilers.

J. H. Blakeman has spent the larger part of last week in Northeastern Connecticut, in a vain attempt to visit several towns where he had appoint-

ments, railroads and wagon roads being blocked.

Miss Myra Curtis has been visiting friends in New Britain.

Dea C. D. Blakeman is still busy with jury duty in Bridgeport.

Thousands to See Corsairs in Action

Sunday Herald

March 14, 1943

Thousands of employes [sic] of the Chance Vought Aircraft and Sikorsky Aircraft divisions of the United Aircraft Corp. will gather tomorrow to dedicate a huge, new final assembly wing at the

Vought plant in Stratford.

The program will be highlighted by an air show by speedy Corsair fighter planes, talks by navy officers and company officials, interviews with navy and marine veterans of the combat zones, and songs by Morton

Downey.

...Climaxing the dedicatory ceremony will be a flight demonstration by Vought Corsair navy fighter planes flown by Vought test pilots...

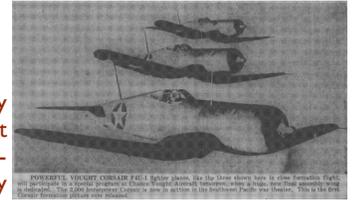
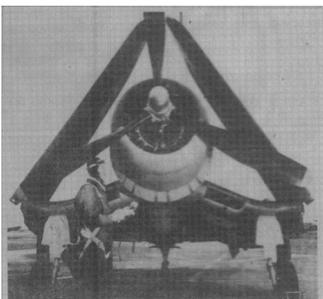
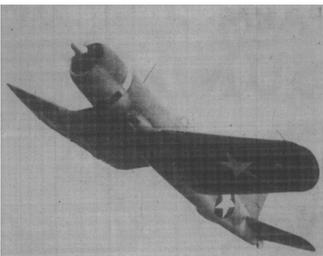


Photo from the **Sunday Herald**, March 14, 1943.



Chief Corsair Test Pilot Lyman Bullard of Stratford.



Corsair piloted by Boone Guyton of Milford over Chance Vought plant.

Corsair One of World's Fastest Planes

Sunday Herald

February 21, 1943

Corsair Plane One of World's Fastest

The U. S. navy's high performance shipboard fighter, the Vought F4U-1/Corsair, which made its battle debut recently, is entirely the product of one manufacturer—the airplane, engine and propeller all being turned out by the United Aircraft Corp. The Corsair is the only fighter plane in the world holding that distinction.

Designed specifically for operation by the navy as a carrier-based fighter, the Corsair combines the engineering and manufacturing skill of the three major divisions of the United Aircraft Corp.: Chance Vought Aircraft, Pratt and Whitney Engine, and Hamilton-Standard Propeller.

Pratt and Whitney engines and Hamilton-Standard propellers have long since demonstrated their dependability under battle conditions in World War II being standard equipment on many United Nations war planes, but until recently, the Corsair had not been tested in combat. Now, it too, has come through with flying colors.

...It is large as fighter planes go having a span of just under 11 feet, a length of more than 33 feet, and a tremendous three-bladed propeller swinging through an arc 13 feet 4 inches in diameter.

...The fact that the Corsair is one of the fastest airplanes in the world and yet will land in the limited space of a carrier, stamps it as one of the most remarkable fighter planes ever

built.

It's performance has shown it to be a formidable weapon from sea level to extremely high altitudes, making practical its use as an interceptor, a medium altitude or high altitude fighter.

...The Corsair has proved its ability to outfight and outfly land based aircraft, an unusual accomplishment for an airplane designed specifically for operation from an aircraft carrier. Its novel design features have offset the additional weight imposed by the use of such devices as arresting gear, folding wing equipment, and the extra built-in strength to enable the plane to withstand the shocks of carrier lands.

The Corsair has demonstrated beyond doubt its right to rank with the best of the United Nations' fighter planes...

“The ice is breaking up in the Housatonic river, and presents an imposing spectacle in the neighborhood of Washington Bridge”.

The Bridgeport Evening Farmer, March 16, 1868

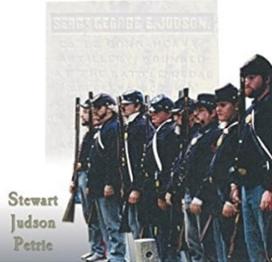
“Hon. John A. Foote speaks in the town Hall, Stratford, Thursday night of this week”.

Bridgeport Daily Standard, March 23, 1868

Paradise Enow ...
TREASURES FROM YESTERDAY'S KITCHENS



BLOODY PATH
to the
SHENANDOAH
Fighting with the Union VI Corps
in the American Civil War



Stewart
Judson
Petrie

Trouble in River City

Bridgeport Evening Farmer
February 11, 1868
“Ephraim’s” Stratford News

We understand that there was a highway robbery perpetrated on the Bridgeport road (Stratford Avenue), near what is called Bruce’s Creek (Brook), at a late hour on Saturday night, the 8th. As yet, we have not learned correctly the victim’s name, nor that of the perpetrator; but are told that a gold watch and about one hundred

dollars were taken in an unlawful manner. From what we are permitted to know now, there was foul play, as loud cries were heard by the neighbors who reside in the vicinity. The location where this act was committed is in a little vale, and parties travelling by night will do well to keep both eyes and ears open while passing along here and other desolate sections of this road. There are those who have been driven to this desperate mode of

furnishing subsistence for themselves, owing to the great inactivity of business, and a road travelled so frequently would naturally be sought as the locale of their infamous career, and we are told that persons have been stopped on this road quite frequently of late. We hope that the parties will be brought to a speedy account and the punishment which they so richly deserve be meted out to them to the full extent of the law.

And Even More Trouble

Bridgeport Daily Standard
March 27, 1868

A CONFIDENCE MAN IN STRATFORD.

Yesterday an Irishman representing himself as living in the lower part of the town, raised the wind in the following manner: He stated that his boy, while sliding down hill had

been injured in the spine by another boy running his sled against him causing injuries of thwch his boy had died, and having no little pride yet left, although very poor he solicited charity in order that he might not be compelled to call upon the town to bury his son. His operations were chiefly con-

finied to the upper portion of the town where he was very successful in victimizing many persons—some to the amount of one dollar, fifty cents and like amounts. He is reported to be a resident of East Bridgeport.

Feeding mind and body...

Available from the Historical Society’s bookstore we find **Bloody Path to the Shenandoah: Fighting with the Union VI Corps in the American Civil War**, Drawing from the primary resource of Charles Judson’s diaries from 1863 and 1864, Stewart Petrie incorporates other information concerning the Union VI Corps to paint this picture of Civil War life. The unending problems of long marches, heat exhaustion, poor food, and illness are punctuated with episodes of brutal warfare and stark terror. The Union VI Corps participated in such hard-fought battles as the Wilderness, North Anna River, the slaughter at Cold Harbor, and most notably at Cedar Creek.

Also available from our Society office, and also availa-

ble for purchase, the following is a recipe selected from our historic cookbook, “**Paradise Enow ... Treasures from Yesterday’s Kitchens.**”

SAMUEL BENJAMIN’S LEMON PIE

2 lemons, chop rind fine
2 eggs
Small bit of butter
1 small teacup flour
3 cups sugar
2 cups water
Mix well. Bake with two crusts. For two pies.

Tester’s Note: I used 1/2 tablespoon of butter and 2/3 cup of sugar. I discarded the inside pith and seeds of the lemon, and put everything else through the grinder. I made this amount into one 9” pie

and baked it at 375 for 40 minutes. It had an excellent tart flavor and the texture of a cornstarch pudding. (V.K.)

Orcutt speaks in his **History of Stratford** of “Colonel Samuel Benjamin, whose brilliant record in the War of the Rebellion was worthy of his grandsire”. His grandfather had been Frederick A. Benjamin of Revolutionary War fame.

At one time Benjamin lived in the famous (or infamous) Captain Dowdall house, better known as the site of the “Stratford Knockings” in 1850 (**In Pursuit of Paradise**, Ch. 36). He leased the home from Alfred Ely Beach in 1867 and operated it as an inn called Benjamin House.

Government Land Grab

Sunday Herald

March 28, 1943

Stratford Facing More Land Grabs

Rumors that Uncle Sam is really invading Stratford with a vengeance and will gobble up many more acres along South Main st., in Lordship, north of Prospect dr., have reached such startling proportions that many have decided not to do any spring planting.

With U.S. engineers daily surveying much of this treasured Lordship acreage which has been yielding a plentiful annual crop of God's bounty, scores of Stratford property owners are frantic and registering grave concern about being evicted from their family

homesteads and farms.

This Stratford territory is being surveyed by the government engineers with the possibility of extending the length of the airport runway, but it is anybody's guess right now how much territory is involved in the grab or whether Uncle Sam really intends to go any further than surveying stage.

...So far three of Stratford's biggest property owners know their fate—Pat Callahan, Timothy Ryan and Cornelius Ahern—for Uncle Sam has served papers on them and moved in to build duration houses on their rich farm soil.

They wail:

"Here's the government in one breath, telling us all about the need

for victory gardens and growing more food, and then, in the next breath, telling us to quit our farms so that it can take it over for other purposes!"

As the three farmers gazed toward the Chance-Vought plant and viewed the massive construction machinery as they would locusts, they asked each other why it is that their food-producing acres have to be seized and ruined in this time of food shortage when there's all kinds of non-producing land to be had.

They referred to the long useless stretches of waste meadow a short distance away whose owners would have been glad to sell to the gov't...



Callahan Farm Stand, South Main Street, c 1950

Disingenuous Copperheads

Hartford Daily Courant

February 27, 1868

A person by the name of A. B. Judd, Esq., of Stratford, recently got together, with half a hundred more, whose sympathies were with the rebels during the war, in a tavern in Bridgeport, and had what are called "social festivities" in a paper of that burg. Among them was the presentation of an American flag to the proprietors of the copperhead newspaper of that city, which says that its own flag was lost or stolen when the Union mob destroyed its office furniture in 1861. Into the awful Juddian presence the proprietors were

made to come, and stand and swear that they would defend the flag with their life's blood, "here, sires, in the city of Bridgeport, surrounded and possessed of all the advantages of modern civilization." "Sirs," said the "eloquent" Judd, "that flag, sirs, is now yours - yours to preserve - yours to protect, to uphold. Swear, then, by the Eternal God above you, that when the wild waves of fanaticism shall again assail it, when mad ambition, in its insane ravings, shall again attempt to 'hawk at and tear it,' you will appeal, through the thousand-tongued voice of the press - aye, by your life's blood,

if need be - to the American people to rise up[in their majesty and defend it. Let us all swear, gentlemen, that that flag shall not again be assailed without redress - that the vile hands of traitors in our midst shall not again rend it with impunity." That is what we call wholesome medicine, though the oath must be a little bitter to the taste to those peace sneaks (for so we are forced to call this Judd and the copperhead publishers), who in 1861-2-3 couldn't be got to display the national colors, but ran up the vile white flags when they dared, and were always despondent, and glum,

and cross on the news of Union victories, and radiant over Union defeats. In 1861, such copperhead papers as that at Bridgeport refused to display the Union flag, and in many places the excited populace compelled them to do so. How then dare the "eloquent," but unblushing Judd, in rhetoric that might beguile the very tree-toad from his limb, advise these copperhead proprietors, in re flag, "Sirs, as the morrow's sun ushers in the coming dawn, spread its folds upon the morning breeze of the birthday of the Father of his country." Judd: you have no right to be as poetical as you can.

A Contemporary Criticized

The Hartford Courant

March 24, 1918

Stratford has already earned a reputation all by itself. Its fame hitherto, however, has been of local color. Now its town clerk has stepped outside the town limits and addressed the esteemed "Waterbury American." That paper published an article, which escaped the eagle eye of the venerable "Courant," and which, according to this town clerk was so awful that he writes to the "American" to say that "a

more pro-German article has never been printed since the war began." When the "American" refers to highly refined products of German patience and skill, such as dye-stuffs, he asks if that means to the corpses from the Lusitania, and so on.

In conclusion he asks if the editor of the "American" wears his iron cross in public and what is the paper's circulation in Berlin—referring, we assume, to Berlin, Germany, since Berlin, Connecticut, we

count in the precincts sacred to "The Courant."

We will give credit to the clerk for a willingness to stand by his hasty and foolish words by signing his name to the letter, and we will give credit to the "American" for printing the criticism. As a matter fact, whoever reads the Connecticut newspapers knows that the "American" is as loyally American as any paper in the country, is owned and controlled by men of the highest character, and is a credit to the state.

How anybody could in a sober moment conclude that it was disloyal is beyond explanation hereabouts.

But it is a curious fact that among the crankish developments of the war is the appearance of people daft on suspecting disloyalty in others. It belongs in the same class with the old story of the charges of witchcraft brought against anybody. It was witchcraft and witchcraft was wicked and that was enough. If everybody in Connecticut had the loyalty of the "American," there'd be no cause for worry about plotters and spies...Not seldom the same mail will bring letters of cordial commendation for an article and of contempt for the same article and its despicable writer. Such is life.

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3651 Main St. | 203.783.7000

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203.375.8857 | nationalhelicoptermuseum.com

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joel@joelplebancpa.com | 203.375.1040

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