

THE CUPHEAG CORNER

VOLUME V, ISSUE I

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 2022



Capt. David Judson House
c. 1750

MARK THE DATES:

- September's General Membership Meeting, Saturday, September 17th, 2pm, Stratford Library
- Stratford Bird Festival, Saturday, September 24th, Stratford Point
- November's General Membership Meeting, Saturday, November 19th, 2pm, Stratford Library

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SEPTEMBER'S GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Saturday, September 17th, 2:00 pm, Stratford Library, 2203 Main Street

Join us on September 17th to hear Ken Staffey, the researcher and author behind "HouseStories" on Facebook and Instagram speak. Mr. Staffey, a Stratford native and Bridgeport resident, will talk about his adventures in research and share some of his most interesting experiences as he investigates the people and stories behind the old houses of the region. He will share some of his stories from Stratford and the local area.

Yankee Magazine wrote about Ken in October 2015 and shared some of the house histories Ken has written about.

From the whaling port of New Lon-



Ken Staffey. Photo from Ken's LinkedIn profile.

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

don to the onion farms of Old Wethersfield, Connecticut, photographer Ken Staffey collects the stories behind historic architecture in Connecticut...

...Fowler House in Guilford, Connecticut, has had just about nine lives. It was built in the Italianate style for Edward Fowler around 1847. When he moved to New London to become a railroad conductor, the new owners gave it a Second Empire makeover and topped the flat roof with a Mansard one. They never opened the school they intended to house here, and a Civil War P.O.W. eventually moved in. Later a blacksmith took up residence, running the shop out back. The porch is a 21st century addition...

While we revere our past, and live in the light of its experience, we must have a care not to worship the past, or think so much of the old age of our town as to forget to think of her future, or fail to adjust ourselves to the new conditions which confront us for the future. To meet this future we must go forward with something besides the ghost of a dead past in our memories, and a pride of past accomplishments in our thought.

Rev. George W. Judson's speech at the 250th Anniversary Celebration of Stratford, 1889.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Much activity has been occurring, and more is planned, at your friendly, neighborhood Stratford Historical Society.

We've been having excellent participation with our Candlelight Historical Walks. All of our walks have been filling up with 20 participants, or more. The walks are all occurring about 45 minutes before dusk, and are focused on the Historical District of town.

We will be extending the walks through mid-October. Due to the participation we've seen thus far, we believe we can offer these walks, again, in the Spring. We're looking to "serialize" the walks, so that if a participant misses one in the series, s/he can attend that particular walk at a future date.

We've also been conducting Lighthouse Property walks. The Lighthouse remains closed, and, according to the US Coast Guard, won't be open for tours until next



June or July. Regardless, our grounds tour of the Lighthouse, and the former Remington Gun Club property, have been very well attended.

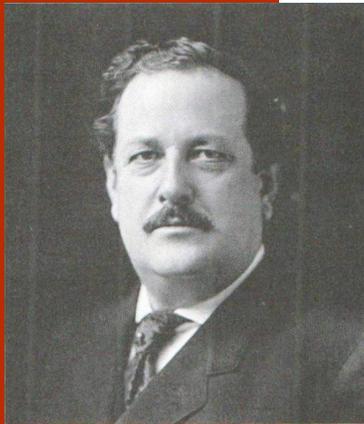
We are still recruiting docents to lead tours of Judson House, and the museum. There will be Docent training classes during the month of September. Those interested should call the office or email us at <mailto:info@stratfordhistoricalsociety.org>.

2022-23 Meeting

Calendar

Saturday	September 17th	2pm
Saturday	November 19th	2pm
Sunday	January 29th	2pm
Sunday	March 26th	2pm
Sunday	May 21st	2pm

STILES JUDSON THE HUMORIST



Stiles Judson
1862-1914

Stiles Judson served Stratford as a State Congressman and a State Senator. Stiles was a reformer at a time when the entrenched interests of the Consolidated Road, as the railroad was termed, had a stranglehold on the State assembly.

Stiles was known for his speechmaking ability. It's rare to find one of his speeches in its entirety. This 1897 speech was known as one of his "humorous" speeches.

Journal Courier
(New Haven daily)

September 21, 1897

Legislators of '95 Dine

'Mr. Toastmaster, or, more properly, Mr. Speaker—If you will not call for the previous question at once I will make a few remarks. I read in the Register some time ago that in intellect the general assembly of 1897 was far superior to that of 1895. Of course I deny any such conclu-

sion as that. It must have been a mistake—an error of the printers in setting up the type.

"There are many reasons why I would not exchange the general assembly of 1895 for that of 1897. One is because of the enduring friendship and fraternal feeling with which our joint efforts in that assembly bound us together. I would not give up the pride which we can well feel in the integrity and faithful stewardship with which we served the public.

...*"It has been asserted that the general assembly of 1895 was controlled by the Consolidated road. Let our critics remember that it was not until our friend, John Hall, convinced us that the Consolidated road was the friend and guardian of all the widows and orphans of Connecticut that we came under the control of the Consolidated. Speaking of Judge Hall reminds me of an incident which happened to Commissioner Baton over there, which illustrates Judge Hall's persuasiveness. He*

was riding down from Springfield a while ago on the cars and got a cinder in his eye. When he reached Hartford he went to the office of our friend, Dr. Whiting, where for the sum of \$10 he was allowed to leave the doctor's office without the cinder. Coming down to New Haven, Commissioner Eaton at once went to the office of Judge Hall, determined to make the Consolidated road pay for that cinder. He stated the matter to him and closed with the query, 'Now, judge, what are you going to do about it?' The judge replied at once, 'I don't propose to do anything about it. According to the strict construction of the laws of 1895 the cinder belonged to the Consolidated road and you walked away with the property of the corporation. However, as the road has no further use for the cinder we shall drop the matter without making you any trouble.'

(Read this entire article on our Newsletter website).

STRATFORD ARTIST ROBERT TREAT



Robert Treat. Photo from
The Stratford News
August 22, 1957

The Historical Society has many of Robert Treat's sketches in its archives. I've often wondered about how the sketches came into the possession of the Society, why they did, and who Mr. Treat was. I was, therefore, delighted to find this news story about Robert Treat in the August 1957 **The Stratford News**.

The Stratford News
August 22, 1957

Bob Treat Records History in Sketches

A trip through artist Bob Treat's studio takes some time, but it's well worth it, especially if you're interested in buildings and places that have made Stratford rich in historical tradition.

Treat has developed his artistic skills almost entirely by himself. The only instruction he ever took was a three-year correspondence course in architectural drafting while he was serving in the Navy over 20 years ago.

Since then he has learned and improved chiefly from his own mistakes. It's been a painful process, but a successful one.

TREAT came to Stratford in 1942. He was born in Bridge-

port, where he attended elementary and high schools. Following graduation in 1923, he enlisted for a four-year hitch -to the Navy. A signalman he spent the largest share of his military life on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

When he was discharged in 1927 he began a period of his life which took in everything from construction work in New York City to an ornamental ironwork shop of his own in Westport.

"I must have done 10,000 things during that period of time," Treat says. "But all the while I was spending my free time doing free lance art work, hoping to improve."

IN 1942 Treat took a job with Chance-Vought here. He worked at the plant for seven years until the firm moved to Texas. Shortly afterwards, Treat decided to place more emphasis on his art work.

"I used to run up to Gloucester [sic], Stonington and Cape Cod to get my ideas but I suddenly discovered that everything I needed was right here in Stratford," he said.

"This town has enough places and sites to keep an artist busy as long as he wants to be."

Treat's major projects [sic] right now is completing a series of lined sketches of Stratford buildings for use in a pamphlet.

Treat's drawings appear in a number of restaurants and other public spots throughout the town. He gets numerous requests from people who want their homes or places of business sketched.

One of his most interesting requests came several years ago from a man who wanted sketches of a schooner he was converting into a hotel in the Virgin Islands. Though Treat likes to have the actual building as his subject most of his work is done from photographs.

TREAT has two children, Patricia, 19, a floral designer for the Garden Exchange, and Bob, 15, a student at the New York Military Academy at Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.

The recent pick up in popularity of his copper sketches has made the Stratford artist happy. He has been working with copper for a number of years, but only recently has this activity shown any progress commercially. Several of his pieces are copyrighted and currently in production.



Robert Treat's view of Shakespeare Theater from a sound-farer's vantage point.. Image from
The Stratford News
August 15, 1957

DATELINE STRATFORD AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1957

The Stratford News

August 15, 1957

Bill Hines Makes Sure The Mail Gets Through

Bill Hines likes Stratford and was happy to be assigned as supervisor of its branch post office two years ago. He believes deeply in the adage that the mail must always get through.

...The personable postal veteran has lived in Stratford 17 years, coming here from Bridgeport, where he attended Bridgeport High School.

...“My job here has been made pleasant by the wonderful help and cooperation I’ve received. We have a good crew, and the townspeople help make it easy,” he explains.

...His wife is a partner in the Mary Roberts Dress Shop in Paradise Green.

Sunday Herald

August 25, 1957

Stratford Trying To Solve Problem

Stratford, on of the few towns to take the problem of juvenile delinquency seriously, has appointed a committee to do a detailed study of steps to combat delinquency, and acted on half of the suggestions within a few months of receiving the committee’s report.

But leading members of the Youth Committee of the Stratford Town Council feel that one of its major proposals doesn’t stand a chance of being acted on.

...The committee asked for legislative action to hold parents responsible for keeping youngsters out of trouble.

The Hartford Courant

August 30, 1957

Theater Asked To Justify Sale Of Refreshments

WATERBURY. Aug. 29 (AP) - Common Pleas Judge Milton H. Meyers today ordered the Stratford Shakespeare Theater to show cause Sept. 4 why it should not be restrained from selling food and beverages.

Judge Meyers acted on the application of the Stratford Restaurant Own-

ers Assn. for an injunction pending adjudication of an action brought to obtain the reversal of a permissive order granted the theater by the Stratford Board of Zoning Appeals.

Sterling House Community Center women have been making sandwiches and selling them at all performances since last Friday with all proceeds going to the Community Center.

The Stratford News

September 5, 1957

Theater-Town Ties Strengthened in 1957

Stratford can look back over an eventful summer at the American Shakespeare Theater prepares to ring down the curtain on its third and biggest box office season in history.

Not only has the 13-week season firmly established the theater here as the world-wide center of Shakespearean drama, but from an economic standpoint, it has given Stratford its greatest asset next to its industry.

While Stratford still fell short of becoming the “Festival Town” it might easily have been—had it not been for several groups dominated by selfish motives—Stratford residents came to accept the theater more and more as the Summer wore on.

THOUGH the 1957 season smashed all existing box office records, theater officials would have been even more pleased had a greater number of ticket requests come from local residents.

The Hartford Courant

September 14, 1957

Helicopter Display Set for Stratford

STRATFORD. Sept. 13 (AP) - The third annual helicopter air display,

If you’re interested in viewing additional newspaper photos from this time period, please consult our Stratford 400 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stratford400>.

sponsored by the New England Region, American Helicopter Society, will be held Sept. 21 at Bridgeport’s [sic] municipal airport here. The display will bring together the largest collection of helicopters ever seen in New England.

The Hartford Courant

September 17, 1957

Hepburn Speech Marks Final Stratford Show

STRATFORD. Sept. 16 (AP) - In an emotional voice, Miss (Katharine) Hepburn told the packed house it had been “and enormous privilege” for the group to participate in the festival. She said the theater now was well established in Stratford to carry out its goal of fine productions of the plays of William Shakespeare.

The Hartford Courant

September 21, 1957

Stratford Eliminated In Softball Tourney

CLEARWATER, Fla., Sept. 20 (AP) - Darkhorse Montreal eliminated the pre-tournament favorite, Stratford, Conn., from the Men’s World Softball Tournament today.

...Stratford’s Raybestos Cardinals had won the championship in 1955 and were runnersup [sic] to the Clearwater Bombers last year.

Sunday Herald

September 29, 1957

Far-Sighted Son of Sikorsky Predicts Building Industry Will Use Helicopters

The newest Sikorsky name at the Bridgeport-Stratford plant is Sergei, no. 1 son of the noted helicopter inventor. Sergei Sikorsky is the image of his father, blue-eyed and even beginning to emulate his baldness.

He also emulates Igor in his vision. “The day is coming soon,” he told The Herald last night, “when the helicopter will revolutionize home-building. It simply will pick up a prefabricated house and set it down over the foundation—just like that.”



Katharine Hepburn as Beatrice and Alfred Drake as Benedick in Shakespeare Theatre’s play **Much Ado About Nothing**. Photo from **The Hartford Courant**, Sept. 8, 1957.



Rosh Hashanah Choir directed by Ted Koskoff. Photo from **Sunday Herald**, September 22, 1957.



Ingrid Cawthra (accordion) and Karen Battista give a recital at Sterling House. Photo from **Sunday Herald**, September 2, 1957.

NOW SHOWING AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1957



Stratford Theater c 1934

August 4th	The Delicate Delinquent	Jerry Lewis
August 11th	Beau James	Bob Hope, Vera Miles
August 18th	Love in the Afternoon	Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, Maurice Chevalier
August 25th	Silk Stockings	Cyd Charisse, Fred Astaire
September 1st	Band of Angels	Clark Gable, Yvonne DeCarlo
September 8th	Omar Khayyam	Cornel Wilde, Deborah Paget
September 15th	Hatful of Rain	Eva Marie Saint, Don Murray
September 22nd	Night Passage	James Stewart, Audie Murphy
September 29th	The Fuzzy Pink Nightgown	Jane Russell, Keenan Wynn

ODD REQUESTS TO THEATRE STAFF



Elizabeth Ginnell and Edythe Simons at Shakespeare Theatre. Photo from *Sunday Herald*, August 4, 1957.



Early Hyman rooms at Susan Freeman's while performing at the Shakespeare Theatre. Photo from *Sunday Herald*, September 8, 1957.



Shakespeare Academy students with Jack Landau, Mitchell Agruss and Morris Carnovsky. Photo from *Sunday Herald*, September 8, 1957.

Looking back 65 years, it seems very clear that 1957 was the "high water" mark year for the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre. Katharine Hepburn was in town and with her came a legion of film and Broadway stars, the star struck, and the star wannabes. The town wasn't well prepared for the crush of out-of-towners, and the local restaurants resented the Theatre when the Theatre provided food services to Theatre goers.

1957 should have been the year when the value of the Theatre, and its potential, were realized. However, that was not to be.

Ordinarily, we would not reprint a newspaper article of this kind in its entirety. However, this is such a timeless period piece, it seemed to well demonstrate what the Theatre could have meant for the Town's economic development.

Sunday Herald

August 4, 1957

Odd Requests to Bard Staffers Varied as Shakespeare's Tales

The Shakespeare Theater is the scene of two dramas which are played off stage and are only viewed in, part by the public.

One is a drama of toil and trouble — the ordeal of the box office to meet the flood of requests for tickets. Financially, though, this is a struggle with a happy ending.

The other involves a series of crises laced with human interest and comic relief.

The actors are the nine women of the Accommodations Office who handle everything from finding a place for a couple of hitchhikers with sleeping bags to snooze, to supplying fancy dinner tables for a party arriving on a yacht

All in the name of pleasing the customers, these ladies — three paid, six volunteer — put in a summer of up early and late to bed. At day's end their ears ring with the questions that have been phoned from all parts of the country:

"We are 30 students driving in from Boston to see the Shakespeare plays. What I want to know is, where can

we swim?"

"If we arrive at 6 o'clock next Tuesday, do you know a babysitter for our three children. They are ages of —"

"Can we see the play and spend the night for say, 50 bucks?"

"How about renting a boat?"

* * *

ALL THE WAY from Denver a group of girls phone. They asked for and got rooms. They asked for and got tickets.

"Finally, their happy, spokesman told Edith Pierson, 'Oh, to see Alfred Drake, we're willing to sleep on the cold ground!'"

And, Noble Mackenzie, a girl from Dallas, flew in only to see Katharine Hepburn.

A WOMAN ARRIVES tidily by train in Bridgeport, taxis to box office, picks up large package of tickets and wants to know: "Where would a sailboat land around here?"

Her son's sailing in, she explains, and she gave him a fried chicken dinner for the whole family to bring in. Edythe Simons takes her to the Housatonic Club, then to the Pootatuck.

Suddenly the woman sights her son's craft chugging in on the river. There's wild raving and a salute from the boat. Now how can mom get aboard?

Carol Davenport, 13, runs and gets a maritime friend who accomplishes the reunion.

* * *

EATING REMAINS a problem for those arriving split seconds before curtain-time. A bus caravan of youngsters from Westchester piled out for "Merchant of Venice" a few days ago and had just time enough to stock up on candy bars for munching on quietly during the play.

THE SLEEPING-BAG pair said they had no money after buying their tickets and would the office please find them a place to lie down? Found the porch of the Sterling House was the bedroom of these poor but devout pilgrims.

* * *

"WHAT, YOU MEAN you have no motel with a pool!"

This remark comes in frequent indignation from the more muscular set. The three E's — two Ediths and Elizabeth — tell them, after they've simmered

down, that since they're driving anyway, there are miles of motels and oceans of water around Milford.

* * *

THEY CAME ON FOOT, on bikes, cars, trains, boats. Whether its Katie Hepburn's Portia, or Morris Carnovsky's Shylock or Earl Hyman's Othello, they come as they never did before.

The sombre tragedy "Othello" probably will be No. 3 at the box office. But "Merchant" and "Much Ado" — both containing Katie — are "the big" attractions.

* * *

THE ACCOMMODATIONS office supplies rooms with bath . . . bath, low-cost, lavish, arty, conservative and air-conditioned — Some theatergoers never had it so good — they can practically jump out of their Lordship windows into Long Island Sound, have tables (with a view) reserved and have such a person as Margaret Mulkern, a teacher with a masters degree, to take the children off their hands, while they also soak up a week of matinee and night performances.

* * *

THE ENTIRE CBS TV Staff of "Let's Take A Trip," stayed at the Hotel Arcade. When teenagers arrive, the office likes to put them up at the YMCA or YWCA.

* * *

NO MATTER WHAT you ask, up there in the terrace office, they have a little list. Like babysitters: If you want a teenager, they have in stock Carol Davenport, Cathy Barry. Sue Mitchell, Pat Tolubinski, Sue Osman, Sue Koskoff, Joanne Williams, Joan Benjamin, Linda Baker, Diane and Karen Ludwig, Jean Glad, Natalie Glovatsky, Jenni Fagan, Barbara Di Cava, Audrey Plum, Judy Anderson, Sharon Link and Debby Miller who is now minding actor Donald Harron's two children.

THE THEATER employs [sic] a total of 417 persons each week. Of these 329 are residents of the Stratford area, including about 100 who are volunteer workers.

Eighty-eight are not local, but spend the summer in Stratford, paying there for rent, food, gas, clothing, etc.

THREE HELICOPTER FIRMS IN STRATFORD



The Bendix Model K was built at the company's factory on East Main Street. Photo from *In Pursuit of Paradise* by Lou Knapp.

It's not all that often that state publications, such as the *Connecticut Magazine*, feature Stratford. However, that's precisely what happened in the August *Connecticut Magazine*. The article, *Under the Radar*, which you may read on newsletter's home page, talked about the one time that Stratford had two helicopter companies located in town.

The author was off by one. In 1947, Stratford had three helicopter companies operating in town. Financial difficulties

removed two of the firms, but Sikorsky, of course, remained in our town.

Lew Knapp describes the brief life of the Bendix Corporation in Stratford in his magnum opus, *In Pursuit of Paradise*.

The Hartford Courant

September 19, 1947

Four Firms in State.

In addition to the Sikorsky [sic] Aircraft division already successfully producing helicopters Connecticut has three other concerns in the helicopter field. These are

the Kaman Aircraft, Inc., now operating at Bradley Field in Windsor Locks. It has a Navy contract for the development of its original rotor principle.

At Stratford the Doman-Frasier Helicopters, Inc. is progressing with its project and nearby is the Bendix Helicopter, Inc., whose expenditures in development have been high and which erected a modern plant in anticipation of taking a prominent place in the helicopter industry. Neither of these products have reached the test stage.

REMEMBERING CHIEF THEODORE LOCKWOOD



Photo from *The Bridgeport Telegram*, July 31, 1972.

Chief Lockwood was Stratford's second Fire Chief. He was promoted to Fire Chief upon Allen Judson's retirement in 1951. Chief Lockwood served Stratford in its fire department for 52 years.

The Bridgeport Telegram

July 31, 1972

Chief Lockwood, 70, Dies; Led Stratford Department

Theodore S. Lockwood, 70, of 1721 Broadbridge avenue, Stratford, chief of the Stratford Fire department for 20 years who retired last October after completing 52 years of service with

department, died Saturday in Bridgeport hospital.

...Born in Hoboken, N. J., Chief Lockwood resided in Stratford since he was three years old. He joined the Stratford Fire department in 1918, and worked without pay on 24 hour a day in the firehouse call until 1925, when he was made an active paid member of the 29 man department.

IN 1936, he became the town's first paid fire captain, and 1944 he was promoted to assistant chief, serving in that capacity until Chief Allen Judson retired in 1951.

During his tenure Chief Lockwood was instrumental in modernizing the department and added many new pieces of equipment and the department manpower grew to more than 100.

He instituted a series of training programs for department personnel, and conducted review classes at frequent intervals. He was absolved of charges brought before the Town Council in 1957, in public hearings.

Chief Lockwood boasted that during his 52 years of service to the town, he was absent for only six days because of illness.

"MANIAC" SHOOTS PLAYING CHILDREN

As far as we can determine, the shooter of these children was never apprehended. Sadly, this incident is a bit like the random shootings we've seen throughout our country over the past several years.

The Hartford Courant

September 15, 1922

MANIAC SHOOTS PLAYING CHILDREN

Pours Buckshot into Group —One May Lose Eye.

Stratford. Sept. 14 Police here are searching the surrounding woods tonight in an effort to find an unidentified man believed to be demented who suddenly came out of the underbrush this afternoon and fired three charges of birdshot at a group of children playing in a vacant lot, wounding

three of them. The man disappeared after firing the shots. The three wounded children are Charles Chorus, 6 years old, his brother Sidney, 5 years old, and a younger brother William, three years old. Charles was struck by four shots, one of which may cause the loss of sight of one eye. Sidney was struck in the arm and William in the neck. All three were taken to the Bridgeport

Hospital where their condition is reported as not serious.

Rose Klepacki furnished the only description of the man. She said the man fired at her and then fled. She was not struck. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chorus, parents of the wounded children rushed from their home nearby when the shooting occurred but caught only a glimpse of the man as he disappeared.

MOSQUITO CATCHER INVENTED?

Stratford has long been legendary for its mosquitoes. We could use an actual working version of this mosquito catcher today!

The Hartford Courant

September 26, 1872

The *Scientific American* says:— At Stratford, Conn., where mosquitoes are as thick as fog, lives an ingenious Yankee so they say, believe it who may—who puts these insects to profitable uses. He has invented a large revolving scoop-net covered with

lace, which is put in motion by a windmill water power, or steam. The lower half of the scoop is placed in water; the upper half moves through the atmosphere, and at each rotation draws an immense number of the 'squitos' down into the water, where they

drown and sink to the bottom. Every revolution of the net draws in one ounce of mosquitoes, or a ton for 32,000 turns of the machine. The mosquitoes thus collected make a splendid manure for the land, worth \$45 a ton.

JEROME MAY, BANJO AFFICIANADO



This banjo is tagged Jerome May maker. Built in Stratford, Connecticut, late 1800s.

On this 100th year anniversary of Jerome May's passing, we wish to recall a bit about this largest forgotten musician and inventor who lived in Stratford for many years.

The banjo (to the left) is believed to be from late 1800 built by Jerome Mayberger, who shortened his name to May.

The banjo appears to be all original and period correct, as does the case it is in....This us a real piece of Americana history.

Jerome May applied for patents on his banjo designs, for improving the over all sounds

of the banjo.

His 1867 patent, intended to be an improvement on George Teed's banjo, was designed to channel air through the resonator in a unique ways.

Jerome purchased a home, "Mizpah Villa," at 608 Stratford Avenue in 1913, for his new bride, Grace Darling Hildebrand.

One of Jerome's banjo students was Mrs. P. T. Barnum. Jerome and his band were in high demand around Stratford for many social functions. Jerome traveled and performed around the continental United States. He also was a

vaudeville performer.

Jerome was involved in many local causes including the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Bridgeport Evening Farmer

September 11, 1913

...He is undoubtedly one of the best known and most popular business men in Bridgeport where he keeps his musical instrument store in the Arcade. He has long been at the head of Jerome May's orchestra and he has an enviable reputation as a musician. It is hardly necessary to remark that he has the well wishes of a host of friends...

STRATFORD'S WORST FIRE?

In what has been characterized, and remembered by some, as Stratford's largest fire, One man was killed in the fire. The explosion that set off the fire was heard all over town.

The Bridgeport Telegram

September 6, 1972

Error Seen Cause of Fatal Blast

Chemical Mixup Probed; More Fires Erupt In Stratford Plant
Stratford Fire chief Hans Lundgren said yesterday afternoon that a worker who apparently opened the wrong chemical reactor may have caused the explosion which left one man dead and three others critically injured yesterday at the Ware Chemical company, 375 Barnum avenue cutoff, Stratford.

Chief Lundgren said that following an initial investigation, it appeared that one of the men in the building opened the top of a reactor, allowing vapors and chemicals to escape from the 1,200-gallon capacity tank causing the spectacular explosion.

He said that workers mixed a solution of chemicals prior to pouring them in one of two reactors but explained that one of the men opened the reactor which was working at the eim, rather than opening the reactor not in service.

...Chief Lundgren said that the company used chemicals to make plastic and rubber products, including parts of golf balls.

Robert Blide, 43, of New Fairfield, was killed in the explosion. His body was positively identified

late yesterday afternoon by James Kaminsky, plant manager for the Ware company.

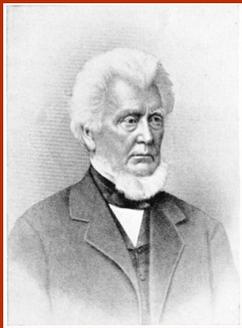
...The three workers injured in the explosion were listed in "critical" condition early yesterday but late in the day their conditions were listed as "fair."

...Undergoing treatment are Joseph Balog, 45, of 2600 Fairfield avenue; Ricardo Oliver, 18, of 85 Andover street; and, John Piontek, 22, of 275 Brooks street.

...Assessing damage later in the day, a Tilo company spokesman said that 165 windows in the Tilo building at 347 Longbrook avenue were broken, two wooden door frames were damaged and damaged sprinkler system flooded the accounting and data processing departments...



Photo from **The Stratford News**, September 14, 1972.



Jesse Olney

REMEMBERING JESSE OLNEY

Olney's *Geography*, which appeared in 1828, forty four years ago, was so wonderfully successful as a school-book, and such an improvement on the prevailing systems of geographical science, that it entirely obscured the method of all succeeding geographies. There are few men now between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five who did not study the book in their youth, and to whom, ever since, the name of Mr. Olney has not brought an association of their school days; and not one of them heard without regret that Jesse Olney, after

a life of varied usefulness, died at his home in Stratford, Conn., July 31, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. Few ever came within his influence but felt a tender veneration for the man, for so many different qualities were combined in his character, that every candid nature meeting his at once struck a chord of sympathy. He was genial, social, interested in life and in people of all ages and classes, and a delightful talker. He had traveled extensively on this continent, and at three different epochs of his life made an extended tour in Eu-

rope. He was devoted to books, and familiar with the best thoughts of the greatest writers, and his daily readings always embraced pages from Spencer, Buckle or other eminent apostles of a great system of philosophy.

He was, from about 1835, a prominent politician in his own State, and was widely known as a sturdy Democrat; but he possessed too broad views and too logical a mind ever to be an illiberal partisan.

(Obituary from **The New York Times**, August 17, 1872. Remainder on our home page).

STRATFORD'S RESIDENT PARROT

The monk parrot's (aka monk parakeet and quaker parakeet) name originated from its unique head feathering pattern which resembles a monk's hood.

When one thinks of parrots, warm jungle climes in the tropics are usually brought to mind. In the case of the monk parakeet, balmy climate is not a requisite to survival.

Monk parakeets are one of the only birds to utilize a nest 12 months of the year. Inside that nest, in freezing cold conditions, monk parakeets remain dry and relatively warm.

Monks were first reported in the United States in the mid-1960s. Argentina had begun exporting what the Argentinians considered an agricultural pest, to America to reduce the number of monks living in the wild.

During the 1960s and 1970s, monks were marketed at five and dime stores, like Woolworths, for \$5 or less. The birds were loud, and thrived on biting anyone handling them whom they did not care for (which was pretty much everyone).

As a result, the common solution to solving a pet monk's biting habit was to release the monk to the out-of-doors. Rather than dying, as most parrots would have, monks began thriving, and mating, all over America.

Monks were first reported in Connecticut in 1968. Their founding colony was on Old Battery Road in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. A microburst on Old Battery Road brought down the main monk parakeet

nesting tree, and with it about 85, or so, monk parakeet nests.

The displaced birds began building new homes throughout the local area including Fairfield, Westport, Stratford, Milford, and West Haven. Stratford has colonies in the center of town, in Lordship and at Boothe Memorial Park.

The Stratford News

August 24, 1972

Nature's Ways

Reaction emotional on monk parrots

By Wayne Hanley

Expect an emotional argument soon over what should be the fate of the monk parrots that now are invading New England.

For the last four or five years, these foot-long greenish parrots with gray breasts have been breeding in the wild in New York.

Last weekend two monk parrots were discovered in the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island. John Rhome of Wellesley, Mass., was the first to report the birds' presence in the Hellcat Swamp section of the refuge. A week earlier, Mary Baird of Lexington, Mass., saw one parrot in the refuge but supposed it was an escaped cagebird and did not report it.

Monk parrots in the wild cause two reactions which tend to clash head-on. It is another wild bird for birdwatchers to list. But, it is a most destructive pest, particularly damaging to fruit and to some truck garden crops.

Many ornithologists believe that the parrot should be stamped out immediately, if it is not too late al-

ready to accomplish the goal. While they expect the bird listers to protest, ornithologists point out that after the first blush a newly established immigrant bird loses glamour. After all, listers once were avid to check off on their annual lists both the house (English) sparrow and the starling. Today no one pays attention to either bird.

One reason ornithologists suggest quick action against the parrots is because they fear damage to native birds if mass eradication of the parrots is attempted after they become well-established.

It's rather difficult to determine whether the birds that appeared on Plum Island migrated from New York or were released locally. There are for instance [sic] small colonies of monk parrots in Michigan, North Dakota and Virginia, all of which most likely descended from cagebirds that had been released. Colonies of monk parrots now exist in New York from Staten Island and Westchester County to Watertown and Binghamton.

Any parrot that can survive in the wild in North Dakota's harsh winters would find Maine and New Brunswick winter resorts.

The monk parrot can breed in anything from a hole in a tree to a rather enormous stick nest which it sometimes builds in trees. It also nests in crevices or other sheltered areas of buildings. The pair usually has four to six eggs. One pair in Saxony, England, has produced 40 offspring. In England the monk parrot is considered a pest.

The native range of the monk parrot is in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay. The birds can mimic



Monk parakeet at Great Meadows Park in Stratford near Access Road.



Monk parakeet at Boothe Memorial Park near the Merritt Parkway Toll Booths.

human speech, but wild birds normally confine their conversation to harsh squawks

When monk parrots first were noted in the wild a decade ago, there was little concern about them. In their native range, they nest in the Southern Hemisphere summer--which consists of our winter months. Their first nesting attempts in the New York area occurred in winter, and the eggs apparently succumbed to cold. Recently the birds have changed their ways and now nest in the northern spring.

REMEMBERING BOB HOCTOR

The Historical Society lost a good friend, volunteer, and financial supporter when Robert (Bob) Hoctor passed away on August 6th. We send our heartfelt and sincere condolences to Bob's wife, Dolores, and to Bob's family.

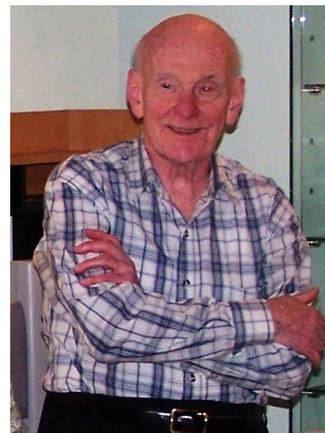
Bob was a quiet, humble, kind, and gentle man who never sought the limelight. Bob contributed much, financially, and with his time and knowledge, to the Historical Society. He served the Society as a Director, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Host, and Membership Committee Co-

chair. Bob worked on the gardens surrounding the Judson House, with his wife Dolores, to make them a source of pleasure and beauty. Bob and Dolores contributed the money for a plaque to Margaret Atwood Judson in the Museum. Additionally, Bob and Dolores made many financial donations to the Society for many purposes, and donated to the Society Building Fund in 1992,

Bob retired as Treasurer of the Society a few years ago. We have missed Bob's quiet and factual

reporting of the Society's financial condition. To Dolores, and all of Bob's family, we can only say we miss Bob and thank you for sharing Bob's time and resources with the Stratford Historical Society.

You may read Bob's obituary at www.legacy.com.



Bob Hoctor 2006

STERLING HOUSE DAY CAMPERS AUGUST 22, 1957



With the 2022 Sterling House Day Camps now concluded, we thought you might enjoy photos of these Sterling House Day Campers from *The Stratford News*, August 22, 1957.

Top left: Samantha Drake, leads the "Gossipers." Samantha is the daughter of ASFT star Alfred Drake.

Top middle: Al Cauthen and Pat Verrilli receive trophies for being "Best Day Campers" from Mary Hardy, executive secretary of the Sterling house.

Top right (l to r): Marci Kusnitz, Paul Smith (King Neptune), Gary Knepler (Jupiter), Kathy Lavery (Queen Venus), and Sheila Greenhouse.

Bottom right: "The Wildcats" singing "Lady of Spain". All the vocalists are seven years old, and they're not really TOO wild.



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*Our mission is to preserve,
protect, cherish, and
celebrate the history of the
Town of Stratford.*

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