

# THE CUPHEAG CORNER

VOLUME V, ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023



Capt. David Judson House  
c. 1750

## MARK THE DATES:

- Nancy Kessler, Sunday, March 26th, 2pm, Stratford Library.
- "Before Salem", April 27th, 7pm, Town Hall.
- Goody Bassett's Last Mile, April 19th, 26th, May 3rd, or 10th, 7pm.
- Goody Bassett Ball, Saturday, May 20th, Vazzano's Four Seasons.

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## STRATFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

Sunday, March 26th, 2:00 pm, Stratford Library, 2203 Main Street

**N**ancy Kessler, CEO and founder of Memoirs Plus, will present stories and words of wisdom from several "living historians" (ages 85 and up to 103) for whom she has written memoirs in the past years. From Connie, age 100, who claims her major obstacle in life is remembering her internet passwords to Agi, age 92, who teaches yoga every Saturday at her house to Bill, age 98 who rode his two-wheeled bicycle every day to see his girlfriend (including winter voyages in Minnesota), Nancy will illustrate how the wisdom of our elders can enlighten and enhance our approach to living full and active lives in our later years. Nancy Kessler will discuss how to start writing your own memoir and illustrate the benefits of seeing your stories in print.



**Nancy Kessler**  
Photo from her Facebook page.

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

### From Nancy's *memoirsplus.com*: **We Listen**

If it's time for you to tell your story, then we're here to listen to you. We usually spend twenty hours or more interviewing you. There are no set questions, but rather we have conversations.

### **We Learn**

It's never too early to start your memoir. We take your favorite stories, recipes, photos and other memorabilia to organize them with you and your family. We also digitize your family photographs.

### **We Find Your Voice**

We help you tell your own story, in your own voice. Without the worries of organizing and editing yourself, we create a beautiful book to share with family, friends and future generations.

*As we in this country wrestle with our feelings about Columbus and Native Americans, or Jefferson and slavery, would it not be nice if someone above the fray would remind us that to "bow to the past" can express praise and admiration as well as regret and shame?*

**Elisabeth Breslav**, Oronoque (*The Villager*), *Connecticut Post* editorial letter

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

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

Our newsletter, *The Cupheag Crier*, is printed, and mailed out on paper, in black and white. We post a color copy of the newsletter on our website, and we email a color copy to anyone for whom we have an email address. If you'd like to receive an emailed color copy of our newsletter, please email us at [mailto@stratfordhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mailto@stratfordhistoricalsociety.org) or call us at 203-378-0630.

Our very energized Publicity Chair, Margo Paquette, has created a fabulous celebration for this May 20th entitled the "**Goody Bassett Ball**." The Ball will be held at Vazzano's Four Seasons on Kenyon Street. Join us for drinks, dinner, dancing, and a celebration of a legendary Stratford woman. You may purchase tickets to the Ball beginning March 15th. Additional details are available on our Face-

book page. You don't need a Facebook account to view our page at <https://www.facebook.com/StratfordHistoricalSociety/>

Leading up to the Ball, we have a number of activities planned to help educate attendees on the witchcraft charges leveled against Goody Bassett. First of all, we're going to attempt to retrace Goody Bassett's last walk from the site of her sentencing to the site of her hanging with our walks entitled "**Goody Bassett's Last Mile**". Secondly, Connecticut Witch Trial expert, Richard Ross, will be presenting his findings in a presentation entitled "**Before Salem**" to be held April 27th. Details on both of these events may be found on page 2 of this newsletter, and also on our website. Lastly, we're hoping to have our Town Council pass a resolution proclaiming Goody Bassett's innocence in May's Town Council Meeting. Stay tuned for additional details.

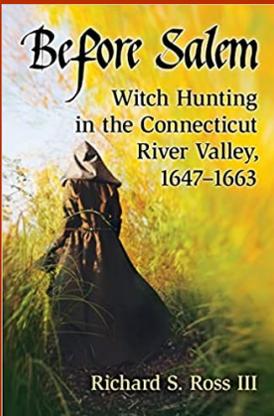
### 2022—23 Meeting Calendar

Sunday	March 26th	2pm
Sunday	May 21st	2pm

## "BEFORE SALEM" PRESENTATION



Dr. Richard Ross, Nau-gatuck, October 2019.



There has been a great deal of study and research into the Connecticut witch trials and hangings from 1647-1663. On **Thursday, April 27th, at 7:00pm in Stratford Town Hall**, Dr. Richard Ross will be discussing this regrettable period of time in Connecticut's past. Attending Dr. Ross' presentation will be Beth Caruso, author of "*One of Windsor*". Ms. Caruso's book describes, at length, Connecticut's first witch hanging in 1647.

Dr. Richard S. Ross is Professor Emeritus and former College Librarian at Trinity College, Hartford Connecticut. He holds an MA from Northeastern University, an MLS from Simmons College, and a PhD from Boston College. He has taught at Boston College, Northeastern University, the University of New Hampshire, and Trinity College. He has held administrative Librarian positions at Northeastern University, the University of

Massachusetts at Lowell, the University of New Hampshire, and Georgetown University.

His book "*Before Salem: Witch hunting in the Connecticut River Valley 1647-1663*," McFarland & Company, 2017 is his second book. His first book was the well-reviewed "*Contagion in Prussia, 1831 the Cholera Epidemic and the Threat of the Polish Uprising*," 2015.

His books have reached an international audience of scholars and readers. They are held in research and national libraries throughout the globe.

Dr. Ross has given talks throughout Connecticut on his book for various organizations particularly libraries and historical associations.

From 1647-1663 eleven people were hanged as witches on the New England frontier, the Connecticut River Valley. The outbreak of witch hunting in New England was directly influenced by the English Civil War and the witchcraft trials begun

in 1644 led by the witch hunter Matthew Hopkins in East Anglia, England. The authorities in New England were armed with a legal manual influenced by recent English demonological writings for identifying a witch and new techniques pioneered by Hopkins for examining witches. For a variety of reasons examined in this book the witch hysteria spread rapidly throughout New England and first erupted in the Connecticut River Valley.

These earlier witchcraft trials later influenced contemporary writers on the Salem witch trials in 1692. This study offers a fresh assessment of the first outbreak of witch accusations, trials, and executions in the Connecticut River Valley. It discusses the witchcraft trials before Salem and the reasons for the continued witch hunting that led to the executions of convicted witches up to 1663.

## LATEST GOODY BASSETT SCHOLARSHIP

Ordinarily, after 372 years, you'd assume there wasn't much of anything "new" that could be said about an event that occurred so long ago. In the case of the Connecticut witch trials, however, it just so happens that current research is shedding new light on a time in Connecticut's and Stratford's past which has been long unknown and unrecorded.

In the current issue of the *Connecticut History Review*, Katherine A. Hermes and Beth Caruso have provided insight

into Goody Bassett's 1651 execution which has likely been unknown for over 350 years.

The article entitled "*Between God and Satan: Thomas Thornton, Witch-Hunting, and Religious Mission in the English Atlantic World, 1647-1693*" reveals when Goody Bassett and her husband Thomas came to Stratford; why they likely settled in Stratford; why a close associate of Cotton Mather's, Thomas Thornton, was likely present for Goody

Bassett's 1651 hanging and also present at the 1692 Salem witch trials; and, where Goody Bassett's husband relocated after Goody's hanging.

The article is a rich source of insight into a little documented and very unfortunate time in Connecticut's and Stratford's past. The article is on file in our Museum's library should you wish to read it. You may pay to download a copy of the article at <https://bit.ly/thornton>.

## GOODY BASSETT'S LAST MILE

For 372 years, the name "Goody Bassett" has had a special meaning in the town of Stratford. Three hundred and seventy-two years ago Goody Bassett's name was closely tied to malefaction, or evil deeds. What Goody's "evil deeds" were is forever lost to history. However, we now know it's very likely that Goody's "evil" consisted of administering to the sick, being associated with Alice Young (an accused Wind-

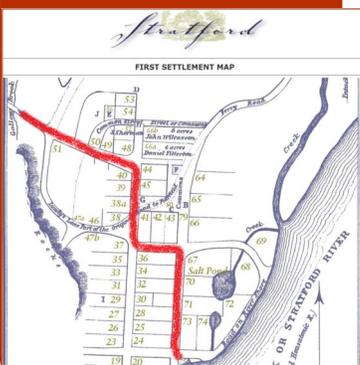
sor witch), and/or being an outspoken woman.

Today, Goody Bassett's name is associated with delicious ice cream. It must be the rare ice cream consumer who gives much thought to the actual person for whom the Goody Bassett ice cream shop is named. Throughout Stratford's historic past, many Stratfordites have lived with the knowledge that a poor, largely defenseless woman was hauled

off to the gallows for no cause other than she was viewed by early Connecticutans as being too familiar with the Devil.

Join us on April 19th, April 26th, May 3rd, or May 10th at 7pm at the Mac's Harbor Monument on Shore Road as we attempt to retrace Goody Bassett's journey to the gallows in May of 1651.

Pre-register at <http://www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org>.



# DATELINE STRATFORD FEBRUARY—MARCH 1958

**The Bridgeport Telegram**

February 1, 1958

**World Softball Tourney Is Awarded to Stratford**

SAN ANTONIO, Tex., Jan. 31—The women's world softball championship tournament was awarded to Stratford, Conn. Today at the 26th annual meeting of the Commissioners Council of the American Softball association.

...The women's championship will get under way Saturday, Aug. 30 and continue over the Labor Day weekend.

**The Bridgeport Telegram**

February 4, 1958

**Grand List Up \$10.5 Million in Stratford**

Stratford Town Council members are continuing their budget study after receiving a grand list figure of \$157,320,630 compiled as of Oct. 1, 1957.

**The Bridgeport Telegram**

February 5, 1958

**New Vets Group Named for 'Shang'**

The newly organized World War I veterans of Stratford have named their group the "Shang" Wheeler Barracks in honor of the late Charles E. "Shang" Wheeler.

Mr. Wheeler who died March 19, 1949 after more than a half century as a civic, political and community leader, was active throughout his life in promoting the work of the veteran organizations. During World War I he served as a member of the Connecticut State Guard and was always in the forefront in any program which involved the World War I veterans.

**The Bridgeport Telegram**

March 3, 1958

**Aides Named to Choose Historical Exhibits**

Mrs. Rexford Nettleton and Mrs. Clara Pierce will direct the selection of the exhibits to be placed in the new museum building of the Stratford Historical society, scheduled to be opened to the public in the later part

of April, Olaf S. Solomonsen, president of the society has announced.

Robert W. Scott, in charge of planning the project, said that the building is expected to be completed late in March and one month will be required to furnish the two story Colonial structure with its exhibits of old silver, glass, china, paintings and documents and antiques.

The society plans to furnish Judson House, the main building on Academy Hill, built in 1723, as a typical home of Colonial Stratford where the many gifts of heirlooms given to the Society by Stratford residents during the past 33 years may be properly displayed.

**The Bridgeport Post**

March 145, 1958

**Stratford Asks Traffic Relief Toll-Dodging Trucks Use Residential Streets, Town Tells State**

Immediate action on the problem of truck traffic in Stratford caused by toll-dodging on the Connecticut turnpike was asked yesterday by Town Manager Harry B. Flood in a letter to the State Traffic commission.

...Mr. Flood said that motor vehicle traffic, particularly trucks, now leave the turnpike at the West Broad street exit in large numbers throughout the day and night to avoid payment at the Stratford toll station...

**The Bridgeport Post**

March 16, 1958

**Sterling House Asks Parley Before New Community Center is Planned**

Sterling House officials in Stratford have written to members of the Town Council and asked a conference before any plans are developed for construction of a community center building in Boothe Memorial Park.

...In the letter to the Town Council, Mrs. Mary Hardy, Sterling House executive director, points out that the Community Center has been considering plans for such a building to be erected in Sterling park...

**The Bridgeport Post**

March 20, 1958

**Stratford Tops Pike Collections**

The Stratford toll station on the Connecticut Turnpike led the seven stations on that highway in collection tolls last month.

According to State Highway department figures released today, 242,244 autoists paid tolls at Stratford in February. Norwalk collected 227,310.

**The Bridgeport Post**

March 23, 1958

**Beach Fee System Urged By Stratford Councilman**

Stratford Councilman George F. Wright says that he will seek action by the Town Council at the April 14 meeting "to protect our beaches for the townspeople" as a result of the announcement in Bridgeport that out-of-town residents will be charged a fee for parking at Seaside park.

**The Bridgeport Post**

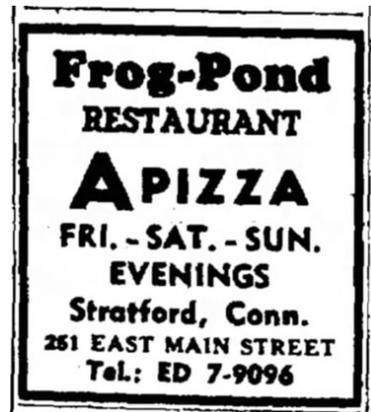
March 26, 1958

**Historical Society To Meet on Friday**

Mrs. Arthur S. Griswold of Stratford will be the guest speaker of the Stratford Historical society at a meeting Friday at 8 p.m. in the Stratford Methodist church hall, according to Miss Lucy McCabe, program chairman.

Mrs. Griswold will display her unique collection of antique snuff bottles, which numbers over 400 and show colored slides.

Olaff S. Solomonson will preside at the business meeting when an amendment to the constitution will be presented, concerning the formation of an acquisition committee. A report will be made on the progress of the new museum building. It is expected that a formal opening date will be announced for May. The display committee is headed by Miss McCabe.



Ad from *The Bridgeport Post*, February 1, 1958.



Valentine's Dance at Wooster Junior High. Photo from *The Stratford News*, February 20, 1958.



Boy Scout Week conclusion at Town Hall. Photo from *The Stratford News*, February 20, 1958.



Garden School PTA. Photo from *The Stratford News*, February 27, 1958.

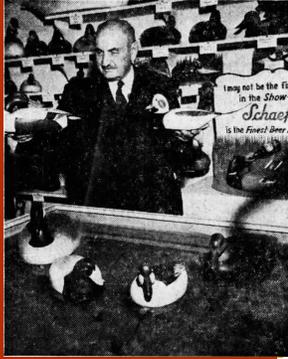
## NOW SHOWING FEBRUARY—MARCH 1958



Stratford Theater c 1934

February 2nd	<b>Don't Go Near the Water</b>	Glenn Ford, Gia Scala
February 9th	<b>Sayonara</b>	Marlon Brando
February 16th	<b>Sayonara</b>	Marlon Brando
February 23rd	<b>Peyton Place</b>	Lana Turner
March 2nd	<b>Peyton Place</b>	Lana Turner
March 9th	<b>Darby's Rangers</b>	James Garner
March 16th	<b>Wild Is The Wind</b>	Anna Magnani, Anthony Quinn
March 23rd	<b>Raintree County</b>	Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, Eva Marie Saint
March 30th	<b>A Farewell to Arms</b>	Rock Hudson, Jennifer Jones

# STRATFORD CHARACTERS



Charles (Shang) Wheeler at National Sportsman's show in NYC. Photo from *The Hartford Courant*, February 19, 1948

On the previous page of this newsletter, we related how the town's veterans planned to honor Shang Wheeler for his more than 50 years of service to Stratford. Shang was known for his many, many talents, contributions to Stratford, political acumen, and his knowledge of the Housatonic River and our shoreline.

In a 1948 *Bridgeport Post* article, author H. O. Bishop paints a fairly complete and lively word portrait of Shang's storied life. While the article is much too lengthy to reproduce in this newsletter, we invite you to read the article on the home page of our

newsletter website.

**The Bridgeport Post**  
August 17, 1948  
**His Artistry Deceives Ducks, So Well Does He Copy Nature's Handiwork**

...Many years ago Shang added the art of cartooning to his many other accomplishments. He is putting it to excellent use in the present intelligent campaign against pollution of Connecticut's streams.

Bitter, indeed, is Shang against the heretofore wild, crazy, careless, greedy way that the public destroyed natural resources through the unforgivable pollution of pristine streams by ruthlessly

dumping town sewers into them. Also poisonous trash from many industries.

It was cheap, easy, but, oh so destructive. For years nobody seemed to give a darn. Now they're wide awake and realize that a big source of food supply has disappeared. Fish are fussy about their grub - more so than people.

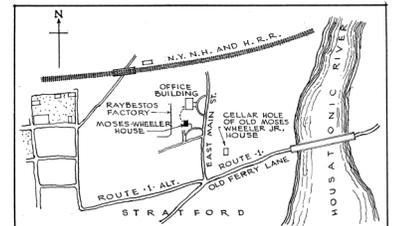
In the meantime monster trees were timbered. Pitiless sunlight hit the earth, rain ran off in a hurry, causing floods. Earth dried quickly, washed away quickly. No shelter left for bird and animal life. Nature's balance went cock-eyed. Man had joined the predators, and the devil was to pay...

## MOSES WHEELER'S FIREPLACE

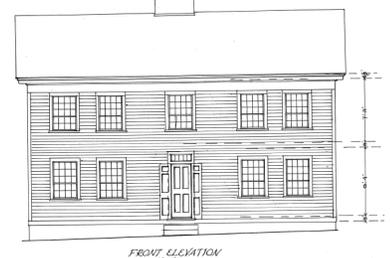
**The Hartford Courant**  
March 4, 1923

ONE OF CONNECTICUT'S LARGEST FIREPLACES—It is on the old Wheeler Place, Stratford, built in 1664 by Moses Wheeler, one of the founders of the town. Until recently, when William Potter of Bridgeport bought the place and renovated it, the old fireplace had been boarded up and cemented for many years. It measures 8 ft., across—big enough for a real Yule log—and is 5 ft. 6 inches high and nearly 4 ft. deep.

The Library of Congress drawings to the right show a sketch of Moses Wheeler's home. The home was located at about the site of today's Whiskey Barrel restaurant on East Main Street.



SKETCH MAP SHOWING LOCATION



FRONT ELEVATION  
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



## CHARLES RYDER RECALLS 1888

**The Bridgeport Post**  
February 23, 1958  
**Blizzard of '88 Remains Vivid in Memory of Charles Ryder, 85, Native of Stratford**

...The snowfall of last week and the highs [sic] winds which whipped it into blizzard proportions brought the historical saga of '88 vividly to the mind of Charles H. Ryder, 85, who now resides at Hastings-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., but who was then a resident of Oronoque, Stratford.

...I was born in Oronoque, Connecticut, Town of Stratford on the 26th of May in 1873.

I lived with my father, mother and older brother on a small farm

of 20 acres on which we raised fruit and vegetables and took them to the markets.

...On the morning of March 15, the clouds broke away and the sun shone upon a strange world to us. Old familiar landmarks were gone, buried out of sight in the snow. The south side of the barn was hidden up to the eaves. On the north side, the wind had played a strange freak. The ground was swept bare for a space of about 20 feet wide, entire length of the building. There, the snow had piled up a straight wall about six feet high, sloping back to a depth of four or five feet.

The lane that connected us with the highway ran beside quite

a high bank and the snow had filled this part to a depth of 10 to 12 feet.

A young peach orchard of an acre and a half was buried from four to five feet deep. Just the top twigs showing above the snow. To the west of our farm, quite a steep hill separated us from our neighbors land and here the land lay in almost level fields. The level fields covered about 12 to 15 acres of high ground, extending out to the bank of the Housatonic river at which point, the bank is steep and about 45 feet high.

This is quite a fascinating article which you may read on the homepage of our website: [stratfordhistoricalsociety.info](http://stratfordhistoricalsociety.info).



Stratford Center after the blizzard of 1888.

# U.S. BAIRD/BEAVER TRACTOR COMPANY

When we look back over the years at the property on which Two Roads Brewery now stand, we usually call to mind the old U.S. Baird factory which stood idle until Two Roads purchased the building in 2012. U.S. Baird was in business for 150 years, and relocated to Stratford in 1912.

We've known that U.S. Baird produced many tool making products, but did you know that one of the very first riding mowers was manufactured at U.S. Baird?

You may read the history of how the riding mower came to be manufactured in Stratford at <http://www.beavertractor.com/history.html>

### History of the Beaver Tractor Company

In 1910 C. L. Warner, the owner of Baird Machine Co, made a very smart decision and hired Arthur J. Lewis II as their Chief Engineer. He started out

working at Baird's Oakville Conn. plant in 1910, as their Chief Engineer.

When the company moved from Oakville, Conn. to Stratford, Conn. he relocated as well. In 1940's there was a garden equipment dealer, The Garden King Tractor Company, located near Baird. Art struck up an acquaintance with the owner, Mr. Hancock and they became good friends. Hancock was offering a garden tractor made by the Smathers Manufacturing Co of Bravard, NC, known as an Acme. It had some shortcomings and Hancock suggested that Art could improve the design.

...Production started in April / May of 1948 with a lever shift drive. They weren't cheap to buy \$429.50 was a hefty price in those days, but 527 sold that year. In 1949 Art replaced the lever shift with a foot pedal. Art headed up Baird's Machine Design Department until his retirement. He was with the company

for 50 years.

### The Hartford Courant

March 8, 1948

### New Garden Tractor

Weeks hence, we hope, home gardeners will begin to anticipate the joys of gardening and lawn mowing (???) and the Beaver Manufacturing Company of Stratford wants to introduce them to its new small tractor. With lawn mowers attached, owners can ride and mow. They can remove snow and do various garden jobs, of course if they have the right attachments. This tractor has gears for reverse action and a convenient steering lever. It has a three horsepower engine.

### The Bridgeport Post

December 5, 1954

### Baird Co. to Market Small Farm Tractor

The Baird Machine company of Stratford, designers and builders of high production machine tools since 1849, has announced that



1948 mid 1949, serial numbers 4470-1 through 4470-1000

<http://www.beavertractor.com>

it will take over, effective immediately, the marketing of the Beaver Riding tractor, one of the smaller four-wheel farm and garden tractor units. Baird has manufactured the Beaver tractor since its introduction in 1947. However, until recently, the sale has been handled by The Beaver Tractor company, also of Stratford. Under the new setup, The Beaver Tractor Company has ceased operations and all existing dealer contracts have been taken over by Baird.

## CRIME FIGHTING ADVICE FROM A CAREER CRIMINAL

Murty Savage was a career criminal. "Savage was first arrested in New Haven in June, 1876, for theft and burglary under the alias of Henry L. Christie. He served a term in state prison for that, and in August, 1894, he was again arrested for burglary and served a second term in prison."

When Murty wasn't in state prison over his 22 years crime

career, he never ceased to cause problems. He stole a horse from Truman Booth, a wagon, and several coats in Stratford. Savage considered one of the most dangerous men ever arrested in New Haven.

### Morning Journal & Courier

February 1, 1898

Murty Savage, the old time thief who is in the county jail

awaiting trial for home theft, told Deputy Sheriff Stagg of Stratford yesterday that there ought to be an electric light at the corner of Church and Main streets. Stratford, and that a wire ought to be run to the Washington bridge tender's house, so that the officer could intercept criminals. Now that he is in jail, and likely to stay there, Savage appears quite solicitous of Stratford people.



Fourth Washington Bridge 1893-1921.

## REMEMBERING JANET JACOPIAN

It is with a great deal of sadness that we note the passing of one of our dedicated volunteers and friends, Janet Jacopian.

Janet grew up in Stratford and married her Wooster Junior High sweetheart, Gary.

Janet and Gary were very involved in the Stratford Historical Society.

Janet served as Chair of the Hospitality Committee. She was active on the Hospitality Committee for many years following her chairmanship. Janet was also a volunteer Hostess for the Society.

Janet and Gary were involved in many of the fundraising projects of the Society. She and Gary were recognized for their 50th wedding anniversary by the Society in 2011.

We note from *The Bridgeport Post* that Janet was a model in the Mother and Daughter Show at Eli Whitney School in March of 1973.



Janet Louise McCune Jacopian. Photo from *The Connecticut Post*.

Janet L. McCune  
115 Barrows Street  
"Jan"

Amicable . . . "Gee" . . . extra specially warm smile . . . has an interest in a certain soldier boy . . . modestly efficient.

Debating Club 3, 4; F.T.A. 2, 3; Girls' Choir 2; National Honor Society 3, 4; Quill Staff 2, 3; Senior A Cappella 2, 3, 4; Variety Show 2, 3, 4; Clarion Editor 4.

Photo from the Stratford High School Log 1957.

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Nettie Filmer.  
Photo from *The Bridgeport Telegram*,  
July 15, 1924.

There is a regrettable dearth of information concerning Stratford's women in the official histories of our town. We probably need to create a volume entitled "Stratford Herstory" to document the many contributions Stratford's women have made to the town.

Fortunately, every year we mark Women's History Month here in our newsletter, and we try to recognize a few of the remarkable women who've played a role in shaping our town.

Nettie A. Filmer was one such lady. Nettie was born in 1871, and moved to Stratford with her parents in 1895. She married Sterling Filmer in December 1900.

Nettie was very involved in Stratford's schools. She taught sixth grade at Center School for 16 years, and served on the town's school board for 8 years. Nettie was elected to the School Board in 1915. She served as Board secretary in 1921.

Nettie served as Chair of the Stratford Red Cross in 1919. In 1921 Nettie was elected as the first Registrar of Voters in Connecticut along with Sallee Wells.

In her spare time, Nettie was placed in charge of rebuilding Stratford High School after the Center School building was destroyed by fire in 1921.

Nettie served on the Republican Town Committee in 1922, and she was active in the Stratford Historical Society.

Coincidentally enough, Nettie lived at 797 East Broadway which was the former home of Frederick Sedgwick the distinguished and long time leader of Sedgwick Academy. Apparently, 797 East Broadway was a magnet for educators.

### **Bridgeport Evening Farmer**

November 29, 1921

*With the appointment of Mrs. Filmer and Miss Wells, Stratford claims the distinction of having the first two women registrars of voters in the state, while the town*

*was only beaten by New York city a few days in having the first women registrars in the United States.*

### **The Stratford News**

September 18, 1936

### **Burial of Mrs. Filmer at Union Cemetery to Take Place Saturday**

*Mrs. Filmer was a well-known teacher, having taught sixth grade at Center School for the past sixteen years and seven years before that in Bridgeport. She was born in Stoneham, Mass., on May 12th, 1871, and moved here from Bridgeport in 1895 with her parents, Robert and Mary Ann Strickland. Her father was first selectman.*

*Noted for her diligent work in the Red Cross during the World War, Mrs. Filmer was very active in the local Parent-Teachers' Association and also served on the Board of Education for eight years. She graduated from Bridgeport High School and received her teacher's training at the Bridgeport Normal School.*



Stratford High's Girls' Basketball Team 1923. Photo from *The Bridgeport Telegram*, February 1, 1923. This accomplished teams won eight straight games.

## MAY MOREHOUSE 1ST FEMALE TOWN CLERK

May Morehouse was Stratford's first female Town Clerk and one of the first female Town Clerks in the State.

May was born in 1897 to William C. and Alice Morehouse. May lived at 1078 Church Street about where I-95 crosses Church Street. She played the role of an old maid in Stratford High's school play *Miss Fearless & Co.* in 1914. May graduated from Stratford High School in June 1914.

On the recommendation of then Town Clerk Harold Lovell, May was appointed Associate Town Clerk on January 1, 1918. She served as Harold Lovell's assistant for 18 months prior to being appointed Associate Town clerk.

When Harold Lovell left the Town Clerk position in 1922, May was voted in to assume his responsibilities. She was elected polling 1,400 votes

which was a unanimous show of support from the voters. May continued as Town Clerk until her death at the very young age of 37 on May 26, 1934.

William Howard Wilcoxson, Stratford's first Town Historian, took over as Town Clerk upon May's death.

May also served as a Justice of the Peace and a Notary Public.

## IMELDA GOYETTE EDUCATOR EXTRODINAIRE

Imelda Goyette was a Stratford High School teacher for nearly 44 years. She retired in 1962 after being assigned to Bunnell High after it was opened in 1961.

Imelda was born in Quebec, Canada in 1897. Her first Stratford home was at the site of the new Stratford High at 257 King Street. She later moved to 1009 Wells Place.

Imelda was very active in her community serving as President of the Stratford Teachers

Association 1936, and was a long time leader in the Association.

Her involvement in Stratford schools was far more than her teaching role. She was the Senior Class advisor for 29 years.

Upon her retirement she moved to Florida and died there February 4, 1983.

Bunnell High **Laurel** 1962

*For Miss Goyette, retirement brought to a close an outstanding teaching career spanning approxi-*

*mately forty-four years. The majority of this time was spent in the Stratford High School, where during her concluding five years she served as Chairman of the Business Department.*

*In addition to her full time teaching activities, Miss Goyette served as advisor to twenty-nine senior classes and participated extensively in community affairs. All who came in contact with Miss Goyette will remember her as a dedicated teacher devoted to the education of youth.*



Imelda Goyette.  
Photo from *The Stratford News*, June 19, 1936.

# JUDSON HOUSE 300TH ANNIVERSARY?

Today in the Historical Society, we like to claim that the Captain David Judson House was built in 1750. The 1750 date seemed to have come into "vogue" around 1979. Prior to that, the Historical Society maintained the house was built in 1723.

The Historical Society prepared to celebrate the Judson House's 250th anniversary based on the presumed 1723 construction date.

**Stratford Historical Society Newsletter**  
January 15, 1973

The 250th Anniversary Membership Drive Committee, headed by Donald Fowler, is meeting and drawing up final plans for this important project. You will be informed as to details by special letter...Increased financial aid is a "must" also as we

look ahead to many projects, from routine house painting to such a major undertaking as the restoration of "Mr. Booth's room", the south chamber with fireplace, to the state it was in when it was the special living area of Mrs. Phoebe Judson, widow of Abner Judson, in 1814.

The Historical Society prepared a very comprehensive, historical article in *The Bridgeport Post*, April 1, 1973 describing the restoration of the Judson House, and the celebrating of its 250 years. Our present Governing Board Director, John Sober, wrote the 1973 newspaper article. All the photos on this page were taken from that article. You may read this article in its entirety on the home page of our newsletter website.

The Captain David Judson

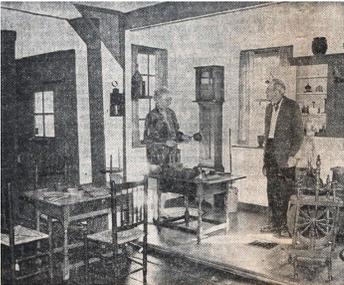
house was designed by Thomas Salmon who also designed the second Christ Episcopal Church built in 1748. Thomas Salmon died in 1749.

David Judson was born in 1693 and died in 1761. He raised five children. It seems highly unlikely that David Judson would have commissioned the building of his house many years after his children were all grown. It seems equally unlikely that Thomas Salmon would have designed the home just a few months before his passing.

The 1723 construction date would appear to be the correct one. We should celebrate the house's 300th anniversary this year!



**GAY NINETIES**—Historic Judson House as it looked in the 1890s. The Victorian era added the twin porches, drastically changing the appearance of the house. They were removed in 1925.



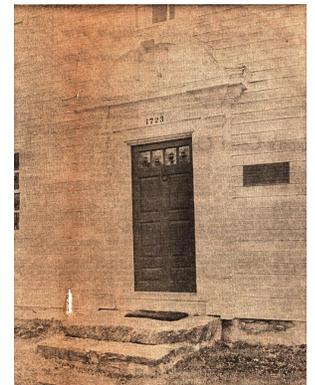
**UPPER KITCHEN**—Historical society members Mr. and Mrs. Donald W. Fowler confer in the upper kitchen. The room contains a number of valued artifacts dating from colonial days.



**HISTORIC SITE**—The present appearance of the former Judson House on Academy Hill street, Stratford, probably very closely approximates the way it looked when constructed in 1723.



**"YE LOWER KITCHEN"**—Despite the quaint reference, this kitchen on the lower level of Judson House was probably used to house the Judson family slaves. Stratford Historical society president, Elden Dustin, right, discusses details of restoration with member Marshall Nye.



**FRONT DOOR**—Unique Judson House portico...Broken pediment design (above door), and glass et in the door were unknown in this area at the time of construction of the house and may have set the pattern for later colonial architecture in Connecticut.

## BOOTHE MEMORIAL PAVILLION CLOSED

**Bridgeport Herald**  
March 2, 1958

### Boothe Meeting House Closing Stirs Protest

A storm of protests from fraternal and civil organizations and individuals is putting the pressure on Stratford's Town Council to reconsider the closing of the Boothe Memorial Park meeting house.

Petitions are now being circulated demanding that funds be restored in the new budget to recondition the dilapidated structure, which is used by organizations year round for meetings [sic], dinners and dances. The Council may debate the issue again tomorrow night in connection with the budget hearing.

But it seems unlikely that Council members will back down on the proposal — submitted by Town Mgr. Harry B. Flood — that the Boothe Park pavilion be closed until adequate funds can be found to restore the building.

"As it stands now," Flood said, "the building is in terrible shape and has been condemned as unsafe by the building Inspector."

**The Bridgeport Post**  
March 4, 1958  
**Repairs Planned at Boothe Park**

Dining and Dance Hall Closed Only Temporarily, Flood Says  
Repairs costing \$14,500 (\$151,533 in 2023 dollars) will be necessary to the foundation and floors of the Boothe Memorial Park dining and dance hall in Stratford, before it can be opened, Town Manager Harry B. Flood said last night.

Mr. Flood said the hall is not closed permanently, but must be kept closed "until I can locate sufficient funds for the repair work", he said. The "Closed for Repairs" signs were placed on the building yesterday.

Mr. Flood said that misleading

information has been given to persons interested in the use of the building and the park. "It has never been our intention to permanently close the building," he asserted. "I ordered it closed after the building inspector made a thorough inspection of the underpinning and foundation and found it unsafe for public use."



**HOLDING IT UP** . . . Photo above shows underpinning of Stratford's Boothe Memorial pavilion and meeting Hall, ordered closed until repairs can be made. . . .Below, meeting room which 30,000 persons used last year. All were apparently unaware of what holds building up. Photos from the **Sunday Herald**, March 2, 1958.

# FUND RAISING FOR OUR SOCIETY

We've been busily working to seek grants to assist us in "freshening" exhibits in our Museum, and improving the functionality and usability of our campus. We're seeking some sizable grants for preparing the Beach carriage house as an events space, and restoring the Captain Selby privy on our grounds. We hope to have some exciting news on moving forward with these projects in the near future.

In the meantime, we wish to extend our gratitude to Howard Aspinwall, owner of the Mellow Monkey, for his ongoing support of the Society. Howard raised over \$2500 which he donated to the Society. Howard published the following press release which we share with you in the following. Thanks, again, Howard!

**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**Stratford, Connecticut**

## **Small Business Raises \$2,500 for Stratford Historical Society In The Most Unique Way**

*Stratford, Connecticut-01/05/2023: Mellow Monkey Gifts and Decor announced today that it has raised more than \$2500 for the town's Historical Society through the sale of vintage maps, photos and memorabilia reproductions. On Monday, January 9th, Mellow Monkey Owner, Howard Aspinwall will present a check to Gail Liscio, President of the Stratford Historical Society at the Stratford store.*

*Aspinwall approached Liscio in the Summer of 2020 with the idea to reproduce artifacts from the Society's archives as a fund raiser for the organization. Together with SHS members, Aspinwall combed through hundreds of maps and drawings from the Society's archives including vintage photographs of local trolleys, vintage maps of the greater Stratford area and vintage drawings including numerous images of aircraft built right in Stratford by*

*Sikorsky Vought.*

*"The project has been a very exciting one for both the store and the Society as it makes these artifacts that have been previously reserved for viewing only at the Historical Society's library available and accessible as a decorative item for the home or office." said Aspinwall. "Most importantly, a portion of the sale of each item goes directly to support the Stratford Historical Society. It's also one more example of how important small businesses can be to the community."*

*"We're very excited with this project as it makes our archives more accessible to the public while giving the Society a new way to raise awareness of the town's rich history," said Liscio.*

*The exact time the presentation of the check on Monday, January 9th has not yet been determined, but can be tailored to meet any coverage you may wish to do on this newsworthy story.*



Photos of the exterior of the Mellow Monkey (above), and owner Howard Aspinwall (below). Photos by Howard Aspinwall.



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

[www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.stratfordhistoricalsociety.org)