

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PORTLAND, CONNECTICUT

NEWS &

NOTES

MARCH 1977

ISSUE 1

PROGRAM NOTES

Society members and their friends enjoyed two interesting programs thus far this season; one presented by Mr. John Dillon and the other by Mrs. Dorothy Robinson.

Mr. Dillon, at our February meeting, shared with us his collection of Brownstone Quarry memorabilia. In addition to pictures and log books, Jack spoke on the lives of the individual workers as indicated by detailed time records. Some timekeepers were extremely and painstakingly thorough in listing reasons for absence from work. An insight into the personal side of Portland's famous industry was revealed. The evening closed with an excellent slide presentation of the quarry including aerial and seasonal views of quarry sites.

Genealogy, tales and helpful tips to the beginner were offered by Mrs. Robinson at our March meeting. Various sources were discussed and copies of fishing contracts, old census tables, land records and the like were available to members for viewing. From her research into census records of Portland throughout the centuries, she was able to present a unique picture of Portland's growth from shipbuilding, farming and managerial work to tobacco growing (each development traced through the census). The arrival of nationality groups to our town can be charted with the addition of names to the census list. The evening ended with a question and answer period.

FUTURE PROJECTS - RESERVE APRIL 2, 13 & 30

April will be a very busy month for the society. Mrs. Martha Johnson and her Ways & Means Committee have planned a Food Sale on April 2. They also plan to participate in the Junior Women's Flea Market on April 30.

Members of the society will be asked to donate baked goods for the April 2 Sale to be held at the Portland Super from 10 a.m. to 3.

Also members are going to be asked to donate small items for the Flea Market. Mrs. Johnson has arranged for pick-up and storage. (call her at 342-1388). Items may be priced by the donor and will not be sold for less if so directed by the donor. It is hoped that these projects will cover the cost of the newsletter, membership drive as well supplement our treasury.

MEETING NIGHTS SET

By vote of the February meeting, all future meetings of the society will be held on the second Wednesday of each month (no longer alternating between Tuesday and Wednesday). The society meets the months of February, March, April, May, September, October and November.

AT OUR NEXT MEETING

On April 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church fellowship hall, Mr. Albert LeShane will be available to photograph old pictures, post cards and things of that nature. These photos and accompanying comments will provide the nucleus of a society owned slide program on our town and her past. Again, members are urged to bring along their old photos of places, people or events of Portland's past, so that they may be copied at this meeting (no items need be left but will remain in the owner's possession). Questions concerning the program should be directed to Program Chairperson Ruth Hale (call 342-2980).

MEMORIAL FUND ESTABLISHED

In addition to changing our meeting date, the February meeting established a Memorial Fund. The purpose of this fund is to make a means available to the community of supporting the Society as well as honoring individuals living or in memory of the dead. Monies from this fund will be used as the donor wishes. A separate bank account shall be established and a proper and fitting acknowledgement shall be provided. It is expected that most funds will be donated for the future purchase and upkeep of a permanent home for the Society. This would make possible the storage and display of items from Portland's fascinating past, so that they may be readily shared with the public. Memorial donations may be sent to the Portland Historical Society, P.O. Box 98, Portland listing the donor, the person who is being honored and the intended use of the funds. I am happy to announce the fund has already received a \$100 gift.

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE

Renewals and new applications, \$2.50

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

Whether active involvement on a committee of our Society, participation and expression of ideas at meetings or simply enjoyment of a program that's of personal interest, we need you. If you're a member, we'd appreciate seeing more of you. If you are not, we'd enjoy having you join us at our meetings, or better still, become a member.

Our committees and their chairmen are:

Ways & Means - Martha Johnson (ideas and support in fund raising for our treasury)

Membership - Audrey Scheer (encourage new memberships & mail renewal notices)

Oral History - John Conklin (taping interviews with people who remember Portland's past and those who were a part of it)

Museum - Jack Dillon (planning the display and seeking a site to house treasures of our town's past that have, and will, be donated)

Historic Sites - Phyllis Greene (investigating, identifying and marking sites of historic importance)

Program - Ruth Hale (seeking out programs of interest to our membership and community and making necessary arrangements)

Library - Mary Flood (clipping news items of Portland's history as it is being made; keeping record of documents of historical importance)

If you have any ideas or would like to become active on any of the above committees, just indicate your interest to the chairperson and your membership will be welcomed.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS:

President Patricia Aresco

Vice-president Harold Krieger

Secretary Rebecca Robinson

Treasurer Robert Johnson

Chairman, Board of Directors, Roger Hinze

Director Phyllis Peterson

Director Jack Dillon

HISTORY OF PORTLAND AVAILABLE

A 66 page book filled with old photos and fascinating facts about Portland's history from its beginning to 1976 is available for only \$2.50 and can be readily obtained at Buck Library. All Portland residents should own one and they make ideal souvenirs for friends and relatives visiting here. All proceeds go into the treasury of our historical society.

OLD MAP REPRODUCTIONS

Two colorful maps suitable for framing are now on sale as a fund raiser for our Society. One is an authentic reproduction of a map showing the early town divisions of Connecticut and the other indicates Connecticut's Indian tribes and their locations. The maps at \$2.50 each will be available at the Junior Women's Flea Market on April 30 as well as at regular meetings of our Society.

DID YOU KNOW?

Buck Carriage factory began operating in the northwest part of town in 1812. They manufactured a wagon known as a "buck board".

Kellogg Strong was Portland's first Representative to the State Legislature in 1842.

Portland was the first town in the state to have a horse drawn fire fighting equipment in 1909. We were the first in Connecticut to have a motor driven fire equipment in 1916.

Thomas Pickering produced the first bicycle in the U.S. at his plant here in 1868.

We were the first town in the state to have a catholic church (organized 1872).

The first public high school conducted by a town began in Gildersleeve Hall (built 1876).

Portland's first Post Office opened in 1827.

The first paved roads in Portland (Main St.) were in 1912.

Over 250 vessels were constructed at the Gildersleeve Ship yards between 1821 and 1933.

In 1741 a Grist Mill was in operation on Carr-Cox brook near Rose Hill Road that supplied the Continental Army soldiers with flour. It later also ground spices.

Portland's first garden club was organized in 1948.

Portland High School Band was organized in 1949.