



# PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PORTLAND, CONNECTICUT

## NEWS & NOTES

FEBRUARY 1978 ISSUE 3

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

Your officers, directors and committee members join with me in extending to you best wishes for the New Year. We are already hard at work planning activities and carrying out programs to insure the continued success of the Society. Please remember that all committees could use your help. Don't be shy! Just call or see any officer or committee chairman and volunteer to help. For those of you who are unable to offer time, try to make a meeting in the near future. The programs have been interesting and we promise to offer more this year.

### IMPORTANT MEETING NOTICE

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, FEBRUARY 7, instead of the normal second Wednesday due to Ash Wednesday. Future meetings will return to the regular night. They are held at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of Zion Lutheran Church on William Street.

Everett Berndtson, who has for years worked locally at his hobby of the collection and restoration of old carriages, will present a fascinating program at this meeting in which he will cover various phases of this work, the use of these carriages and their part in the history of Portland. He hopes to be able to demonstrate the skills he has acquired in this field.

### MEMBERSHIP

It's that time again - dues for the 1978-1979 year are due! Again, according to our constitution, membership dues must be collected during February. There is a short time after that before they become delinquent but why not try to pay early and avoid the possibility of forgetting this important source of income for your Society. We would especially caution Charter Members to pay early and not risk the possibility of losing a continuing charter status. This year we have already received dues from 20 people, that means there are only 200 more unpaid. Annual dues are \$2.50 and may be sent to the Portland Historical Society, P.O. Box 98, Portland, Ct. 06480. Anyone wishing to join the Society as a new member is always welcome. Simply send in your dues or attend any meeting and pay Mrs. Scheer our membership chairman.

### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

At the annual meeting held in November, the entire slate of officers were reelected to serve the 1977-78 year. The officers are:

President Mrs. Louis (Pat) Aresco  
Vice-president Harold L. Krieger  
Secretary Mrs. Rebecca Robinson  
Treasurer Robert Johnson

This year the term of office of director Phyllis Peterson came to an end. According to the constitution of the Society, she was unable to be reelected. Those who have worked with her know that she has always made herself available to us and has served the Society by her conscientious nature and willingness to take on extra assignments whenever necessary. Thank you Phyllis and we are so glad you have agreed to continue serving on the Historic Sites Committee.

The Society is indeed fortunate that Miss Lucille Cramer has been elected to this term on the Board of Directors. Lucille, Roger Hinze (Chairman), Jack Dillon and the officers have the overall responsibility of directing the Society. The Board of Directors meets monthly to foster the work of the Society.

We are indeed happy that all standing committee chairmen have agreed to continue in their positions. This group have been active in keeping their committees working on projects for you:

Membership - Mrs. Audrey Scheer  
Ways & Means - Mrs. Martha Johnson  
Program - Mrs. Ruth Hale  
Historic Sites - Mrs. Phyllis Greene  
Oral History - John Conklin

### WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

Chairman Martha Johnson is already planning this year's major projects. Plans are now being made for a Food Sale to be held on March 18 at the Portland Super. With your help this year's sale will be as much of a success as the last one. You will be contacted by phone and asked for your baked goods donation.

In addition, we are again planning on taking part in the Junior Women's Flea Market & Craft Sale to be held April 29. Save your old items for this affair. Remember last year in addition to items of value, it was the small, seemingly worthless (tag sale type items) that brought in much of the profit. Martha will

need the help of a phone committee and some assistance on both of these projects, so please call her now 342-1388 and volunteer your help.

There is also the possibility that some of the slides of old Portland shown at the November meeting will be available (duplicates) to the public for sale. Jack Dillon has also agreed that his aerial shots of the Brownstone quarries and others may also be reproduced for sale. Look for news of this at future meetings. These slides could be blown up and made into wall groupings or you might want your own slide collection.

#### ORAL HISTORY

John Conklin assisted by Harold Krieger and Herb Ellsworth have been busy over the December-January recess obtaining personal interviews on tape from some of our townspeople whose residency and memory cover much of Portland's fascinating past. These will be gradually typed and kept as valuable sources of information as well as records for reference. Recently taped were Atty. & Mrs. Dave Carlson, Mr. Harold Ferguson and Mrs. Algot Johnson. A list of other prospects has been compiled. Suggested names or volunteers are welcomed. Statements allowing the Society the use of this information are signed by those interviewed.

#### HISTORIC SITES

This committee has been very active this year. With seed money from the Community Development Fund, they have planned to mark 5 areas of historic importance with cast Bronze markers and to attempt to identify and mark historic homes with wood plaques. The tentative list of historic sites considered are:

- ✓ Indian Hill Ave. area (shipbuilding yards, Indian burial grounds, etc.)
- ✓ Cox Mill area (location of various mills)
- ✓ Brownstone Quarries (former leading industry of Portland)
- Tinware Factory (employer of numerous residents in early days of our town)
- ✓ First Ferry Crossing

Although we have a list of some 40 homes for which we have found original dates of construction and owners, we have about 60 additional homes that should be marked. However, we do not have sufficient information available to us to do so. If you would be interested in researching some of these homes for us, please contact Phyllis Greene, Sites Committee chairman or Mrs. Aresco. There is help for you on how to go about this important work. It takes time but can be fun.

Due to the high cost of this project, the Sites Committee is again asking for Community Development Funds. In addition, letters have been sent to owners of the historic homes,

asking if they would help in defraying the cost of the plaques. If you are such an owner, please consider our request seriously. Any help would be appreciated. Committee members are: Chairman Phyllis Greene, Pat Aresco, Jim and Mary Gildersleeve, Roger Hinze, Clifford Kelsey, Harold Krieger, Robert McDougal, Phyllis Peterson, Dorothy Robinson & Bill Sullivan. Care to join? We'd love to have you!

In addition, Harold Krieger and Roger Hinze (with the guidance of Helen Carlson) have determined the exact location of the old Jewish Burial Grounds and are compiling background data. One of the two remaining headstones (that were moved to another location) has been located and an attempt is being made to reclaim it and preserve it as the only remaining material evidence of the graves.

#### MEMORIAL FUND

A reminder that the Portland Historical Memorial Fund is continuing to grow thanks to your efforts. The latest memorial donations have been made in the name of Mr. John Callender and Mr. Robert Stranahan. Consider this means when you are considering an appropriate means of honoring someone. If you've been meaning to do this, why not do it now and have it made a part of our permanent memorial record. All gifts are acknowledged.

#### 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.

#### FACTS OF INTEREST ABOUT OLD NAILS

Oldest nails are hand-forged, square, long & sharply pointed with a roughly flattened head. From early 1700 thru early 1800 most people made their own from nail rods - long strips of soft iron. Below are shown various types of old nails: (a) machine-made brad, (b) hand-made brad, (c) machine-headed square nail, (d) hand-headed slit nail, (e) handmade small nail, (f) handmade from nailrods.

