



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PORTLAND, CONNECTICUT

NEWS & NOTES

SEPTEMBER 1979 ISSUE 7

AS I SEE IT

The question: What is the most feasible plan to preserve historic Central School? I've pondered this matter for several months and from strictly the point of view of restoring it and preserving it and putting it to the most meaningful use, I'm in favor of the possibility of turning it into housing for the elderly. There has long been an expressed need for quality living units by those Senior Citizens who have been part of our community for many years. In some instances it has been necessary to move to other towns because Portland had nothing to offer. A number have indicated, since the newspaper publicity, that they would relish the chance to now live in the structure in which they received their education...it has so much meaning to them.

Looking at this same question, from my view as a taxpayer, for our town to restore and turn this into a suitable building to be used for offices or some other facility could cost a huge sum of money and then would continue to cost us for upkeep for years to come. By selling it to a developer for elderly housing, we would realize the purchase price plus property taxes that probably would bring in \$20,000 annually. Some question whether the price of \$42,000 is too low. Looking at it another way, would any developer or private party pay much more realizing they would no doubt have to sink a possible half million into it? It would be cheaper to build a new structure.

I know there is some neighborhood opposition for fear of losing playground area, but with the location of the new library elsewhere this should not be an issue. Some probably differ with me, but as I see it, for townspeople as a whole the opportunity to restore and preserve our historic school at no cost to us, in fact at a profit, makes a lot of sense.

Harold L. Krieger, President

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
PROGRAM: HISTORIC CRANBERRY BOGS

Portland's famous Cranberry Bogs have long been of interest to many of us. Not only their history of commercial use as producers of the choicest cranberries but their fascinating wildlife and plantlife. You may not know it but one of the original owners in a

partnership was Corothy Robinson's great-grandfather.

A few years ago the most recent owner of this property, Mrs. David Carlson (Helen is a charter member of our Society) donated this land to the Audubon Society.

Mrs. Sherwood T. Bothwell, Jr. (Judith) of Portland, who has long been active and held office in the Audubon Society, will present an illustrated program on the educational use to which it has been put, the work that has and continues to be done, and their plans for making this of even greater value to not only our community but people in all walks of life.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m., at our new meeting place, the Community Center at 5 Main Street (see the following article). All interested individuals are invited to attend this and all meetings.

SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - NEW MEETING PLACE

As most of you know, a few months ago our town administration made available to us (at no cost) the former John C. Barry office on the 2nd floor of the Community Center. This we will use for Society office space, for committee meetings and to store our historical possessions in a fireproof file and safe which we can secure at no cost. Hopefully anyone having similar equipment or cabinets will see fit to donate them.



We will hold our Society meetings on the first floor for the present, and possibly make use of the 2nd floor meeting hall if this seems more suitable. For those who don't know where the Community Center is located, it's down under the bridge just past Genco Electric in the Brownstone Industrial Park (just before the new Dog Pound). This picture should help you identify it. See you there!

TWO CHARTER MEMBERS PASS AWAY

Joseph DeBerry of 4 Palmer Road was a victim of the DC10 plane crash in Chicago a few months ago. Although not active in recent years, Joe was involved in the early days of our organization.

C. LeRoy Magnuson of Bartlett St. Ext., after a brief hospital stay, passed away on August 19. Roy, a charter member, was an active member. We will miss them both and extend our sympathy to their loved ones.

Memorial donations to the Society would be an appropriate remembrance of the membership. Their names would be entered in our permanent Memorial Book records. One donation was received in Roy's memory to date.

HISTORIC SITES ACCOMPLISHES PROJECT

The Historic Sites Committee under the chairmanship of Bill Sullivan have seen to completion the first phase of their marking efforts. In spite of many delays, the five bronze site markers were mounted (June 26) on brownstone slabs adding to the one marking the Mill Sites on Rose Hill (October 14, 1978). They are: Brownstone Quarries behind Quarry Heights at 206 Main St., First Ferry Landing near the Community Center at 5 Main St., Shipyards Indian Grounds on Indian Hill Ave. near Petzolds, First Meeting House at the Corner of William and High Streets and the Old Jewish Cemetery on William Street, about half way up the hill between Gospel Lane and High Streets (across the street from Fisher's driveway).

To date, 43 homes dating prior to 1850 have been researched and hand painted wood plaques mounted on them. Research is continuing with the plan to mark additional homes as information is obtained. This has certainly been a job well done. Colored photos of the plaqued sites will be available for viewing at our next meeting.

TWAIN & STOWE HOMES VISITED

As planned, the homes of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe were toured by 10 of our membership on Sunday, June 17. Although a hot, sunny day, those attended found the tour very fascinating.

The tour to Webb House and homes in Wethersfield was cancelled. Conflicts in the schedules of several planning to attend made this July 15 opportunity impossible. A future date is being considered.

AUCTION OF TAG SALE GEMS

A few items of value leftover from our April Tag Sale will be auctioned off at our next meeting. We'll make available slips on which to write your bid and name. Top price gets it. Items are: A wooden wall plaque

with an early American design showing an eagle and the word "Temperance" from the Captain's Quarters in Acton, Mass., a cranberry dish with handle and spoon made of Heritage English bone china, an ashtray in the shape of a laughing monk's head with a bee on his nose and an old casserole-type bowl with handles made of T.S.T. IONA china. Make a bid...you are helping the Society. We'll then report the total we made on the sale.

BAKED GOODS SALE COMING

Ways & Means chairman Mandy is cooking up (I should say baking) a food sale probably the second Saturday in November. She's giving you plenty of warning. You'll be phoned prior to that time and asked to bake. Please make the effort; we need the funds for the continuing work of our Society.

DUES NOT PAID FOR 20

For some unexplained reason 20 of our good members (14 of whom are charter members) have not paid their dues. All had originally been billed and have received reminders, with no response.

If you are one of these, I'd appreciate knowing whether it was as oversight or if you have some other reason. We hate to lose good members, so either call membership chairman Martha Johnson 342-1388 or your President 342-1760.

Some of our members had mistakenly sent checks for \$2.50 for dues. They were notified that (as mentioned in our February newsletter, on the renewal slip, and announced at all meetings) dues as of January 1979 are \$3 annually.

WHO WILL USE THESE ROOMS NEXT?

Whatever your preference . . . support it.





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The PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. resumes its' monthly meetings in September.

- SEPTEMBER 11 Ellsworth Grant's film on Old Saybrook at the Portland Library at 7:30 p.m.
- OCTOBER 9 Pot-Luck Supper at Zion Lutheran Church at 6:30 p.m. Members with last names A-L are to bring a main dish to serve eight and members M-Z are asked to bring a salad to serve eight. Meat, rolls, coffee and dessert will be furnished. Entertainment. Members are asked to fill in the form below if they plan to come.
- NOVEMBER 13 Film on Leather-Man at Portland Library at 7:30 p.m.
- DECEMBER 11 Swedish Night. Program on Sweden will be held at the Portland Library at 7:30 p.m.

The Calendar Committee is hard at work on next year's calendar. If every member bought at least one calendar, it would help out.

Members who would like to volunteer to bring in refreshments for meetings are asked to call Lucy Bartalotta at 342-1432.

If there is enough interest, another tour of Portland could be arranged in October. Please let us know.

Volunteers are needed for monitors for our Museum Room at the Portland Library - only two hours on a Thursday afternoon. Call Pat Csere.
