

# PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 98, Portland, Connecticut 06480

PRESIDENT: Eleanor Crowther VICE-PRESIDENT: Christine Sullivan  
SECRETARY: Ruth Freeburg TREASURER: Charles Woltmann  
DIRECTORS: Richard Gildersleeve, Hazel Robinson, Robert McDougall  
FINANCE DIRECTORS: Daniel Crowther, James Elder, Donald Goodrich

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

The Portland Historical Society is celebrating it's 20th birthday year with a number of interesting projects expressing the Society's Purpose - to discover and collect our history and artifacts; stimulate interest in our past; and, foster preservation of historic buildings.

### Portland's Heritage Walk -

Bob McDougall, Director 342-3062

The year-round Volksmarch (walk) through Portland's historic areas opened January 1, and despite the weather, 18 walkers from four states and 2 countries have already walked the 10 kilometer (6.2 mile) route. The walk, and the necessary maps and brochures, were designed by the Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club to highlight Portland's history. The route traverses Main Street to Gildersleeve, Indian Hill Avenue, High Street and East Main Street, returning to the starting point at "Dunkin Donuts".

The Connecticut Valley Club, which co-sponsors the walk with the Historical Society, is a branch of the International Volkssport organization.

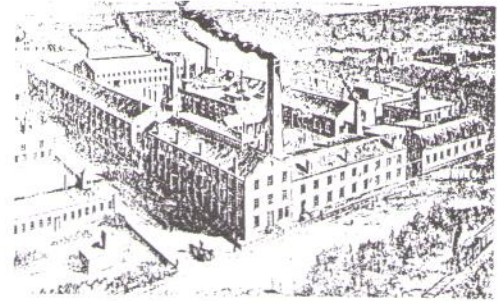
The Volkssport society promotes family-style, non-competitive recreation, combining the pleasure of walking with a historic or environmental interest content. A brochure describing Portland's history and identifying historic buildings and architectural styles on the walk is a part of the information each walker picks up at the starting point. The walk is listed in National and International Volkssport publications, and we expect to be included in Connecticut tourism publicity soon.

Stimulate your family interest in Portland's history!  
Join the Community Walk introducing the heritage route to townspeople during the May 21-22 weekend. Watch for details.

### Celebrate Portland History Week -

Pat Csere - 342-2168

Twenty years of history collecting will be on view nightly in the Society's Museum Room and adjoining Buck Room of the Library during the week of April 11 - 14 from 6:30 to 8:30. Special displays and memorabilia will depict Portland's rich history - Indian relics; shipbuilding, brownstone quarrying and tobacco growing records; and reminders of important events like the building of the Arrigoni Bridge. Volunteers will be available to answer questions. Would you like to help?



Eastern Timepiece Co., organized in Portland in 1888.  
Factory housed American Stamping Co. and Dickering Governor Co.

### Ways and Means -

Eleanor Crowther - 342-2907

In commemoration of our 20th birthday, we have ordered 20 2-quart specially designed Portland Historical Society pitchers from the Westerwald Pottery. They will be numbered 1 through 20, and sold for \$40 each. A wonderful collector's item!! The pitchers cost the Society \$20, and the additional \$20 is a tax-deductible donation. Call Eleanor quickly if you are interested. Only six are left.

## Historic Sites and Buildings -

Jim Sarbaugh, Chairman

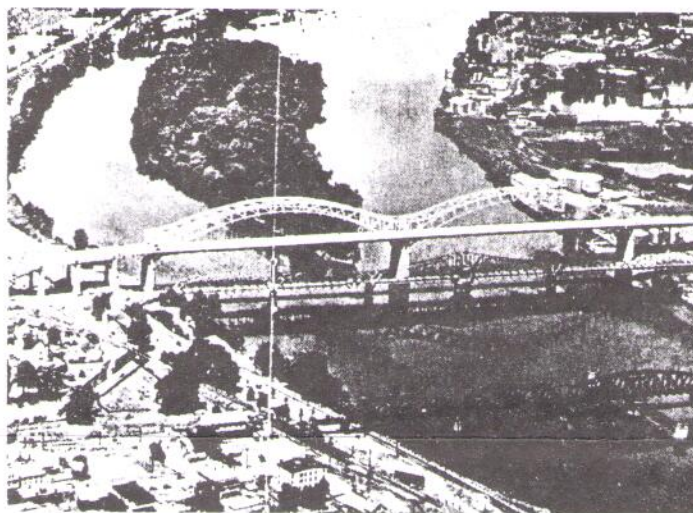
Actions pending on Portland historic buildings:

The demolition order on the Middlesex Avenue quarry houses is still in force. While they are standing, we will continue to monitor developments with interested parties.

The demolition order for the Hedstrom-Carlson house has been temporarily blocked by a court order in connection with divorce proceedings of the owner, Sebastian Paguni. Although the property has been listed for sale, it is doubtful that any future owner will be willing to retain the entire property as a private estate. We will monitor any development plans proposed for appropriateness.

### Town Building Advisory Committee

The Report of the Town Building Planning Advisory Committee to the Board of Selectmen outlines a long-term plan for the use of Town buildings. Among its recommendations is the rehabilitation of both the Town Hall/Buck library complex and Central School, and the consolidation of all Town departments into these buildings. Making Central School weather-tight by this fall is also called for, independent of any other action by the Board of Selectmen. These recommendations honor general preservation objectives and specific positions taken by the PHS. The committee report will be available at the Library and we hope the long-term plan it endorses is carefully considered by all townspeople.



*Aerial view showing railroad bridge, original highway bridge, and Arroyo dedicated Aug. 6, 1938.*

### Workshops - Portland's Future?

All of these pending actions raise questions about the future character and appearance of our neighborhoods and public buildings, as well as the degree to which we can guide, influence or control development. We hope to organize a series of workshops with appropriate Town committees to discuss questions that bear on the direction of future Town development. Our topic suggestions are listed below - have you other suggestions?

- Strengths/weaknesses of Portland's Delay of Demolition Ordinance
- Pros and cons of Historic Districts
- The long-term plan for Town buildings - costs and benefits
- State mandates for affordable housing: Portland's obligations and their development effect

### Site Plaques -

Rick Gildersleeve has kindly volunteered to monitor the historic plaques around Town. If you note any damage, vandalism, etc., please call Rick at 342-5195.

*Thanks to the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust for their help and initiative over the past year toward our purpose of fostering Portland preservation. Their help has been invaluable and we hope it will continue to be available.*

## Betty Keser Scott Garden -

Eleanor Crowther

The Portland Garden Club has given \$1000 to the Society to establish a garden at the future Ruth Callander House Museum to honor the late Betty Keser Scott, one of their long-time members.

We are glad that Betty knew about the garden before her death, and enjoyed planning it's design. It's to be a "Butterfly Garden".

It is with a great deal of sadness we extend our sympathy to her husband "Scotty". Betty will be missed very much.

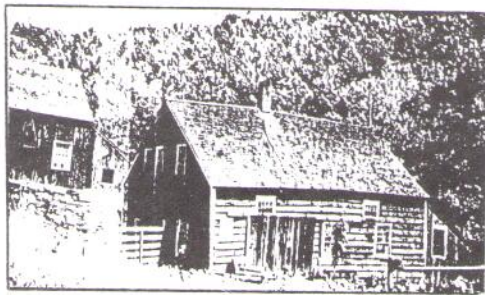
## Special Exhibits -

Vivian Dower - 342-2904

The Museum Room in the Library is open every Tuesday afternoon between 1:00 and 3:00 PM; however, our special exhibits are always visible through the window. The present display, "Things that make music", was inspired by both our March program guest, harpist Kasha Breau, and everyone's wish for Spring song.

## Oral History

We are reminded every day of the valuable Portland social history we are losing as we lose the older generation. If someone in your family can be encouraged to tape the stories of their parents or grandparents for the Society's collection, it would help personalize future studies of twentieth-century Portland. No matter how flawed the memory, no written description can recreate an era as well as the spoken word. For advice, see Library Reference Librarian.



*Cox's Mill, built by Enoch Sage in 1801. Located on Cox's Brook at Rose Hill Rd.*

## Membership -

The mailing label on this Newsletter shows a year above your name. If it is not "94" or higher, it indicates that your membership is not current. Call Bill Frisbie, 342-0303, if you would like to receive a membership mailer. ("99" indicates life memberships.)

Programs -

Regina Woltmann, 342-3092

March 22 - Senior Center, 7:30 PM

Irish Eyes Are Smiling - Kasha Breau  
Harpist and harp collector Breau will play and display her harps  
in a program of International folk songs.

April 26 - Library, 7:30 PM

Steve Grant - The Leatherman Revisited.  
Slide talk of Grant's Hartford Courant sponsored walk following  
the famous Leatherman's route.

Newsletter -

Phyllis Frisbie

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

NEWSLETTER

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 19  
Portland, CT  
06480