



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

JUNE 2000 NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC – JUNE 20 – 6 PM

FIREMEN'S GROUNDS – END OF INDIAN HILL AVENUE

The main feature will be the grand buffet, created by YOU! Please bring a casserole or salad for 6-8 and your plates, mugs and cutlery. The Society Board will provide desserts, beverages and bread. Serving will begin at 6:30 and entertainment at 7:30. If you can't attend the main course, come for dessert and the entertainment. It's a special program by "Old Pink", a duo singing and playing golden oldies – music your grandmother remembers and loved – (and maybe even your great-grandmother).

NOTE NEW PICNIC DATE. Date shown on Society calendar is wrong.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - Bob McDougall

The annual picnic signifies the end of our working year giving us a chance to review how well we've done as trustees of Portland history. Very well, I would say, as we've been a part of major movements to retain and restore our unique past. The town's ownership of the quarries is a major step in re-informing ourselves about the defining industry in the town. It was central to our growth. It attracted our first settlers here, the stone-carvers, and caused the major waves of immigration – Irish in 1850's, Scandinavians in 1870's, and others a little later. For many of us, these were our ancestors. It developed supporting businesses both in brownstone and personal services – food, clothing, finance, shipping and housing that expanded and enhanced the

town. The designation of the quarries as a National Historic Landmark will spur all of our efforts to save this history.

Our calendar this year (2001) will focus on brownstone. Have you any old family pictures and written material depicting quarry operations – or the way workers lived, social activities - that we can publish? Portland's recent receipt of a grant for Main Street redesign complements the quarries' development as a park/tourist attraction. There will be a number of opportunities during the quarry project designing phase and the Main Street project for you to offer your ideas and opinions on how to preserve Portland's heritage. I hope you will take part.

CALLANDER HOUSE UPDATE

– *Chris Sullivan*

In the last few months –

Electrical Contractor Bob Baines has installed the new main circuit panel, replaced switches and outlets, and is installing some track lighting in the exhibit hall. Ceiling repair necessitated by last autumn's storm during the re-roofing is waiting on electrical work.

Original working plans of the house were drawn by Bill Frisbie. Now an architect will be hired to plan the changes needed to meet code requirements for the town's certificate of occupancy, (mainly handicap access and bathroom facilities). We have asked for bids from three architects and expect to have chosen one by the time this reaches you.

Painting – volunteer George Wilson has finished all the windows on the first floor and in the office upstairs, as well as two old doors in the exhibit hall. Don Kelsey and Pat Crowther have painted the walls and trim in the main exhibit room and the office.

Much time-consuming detail work has been done by Pat Crowther repairing doors, windows, drawers, etc. Eleanor Crowther has been taking care of most of the house-keeping details.

An old shelf clock given by Ruth Callander is working again thanks to Frank Sullivan.

We have hired Jim Landry to mow the lawn during June, July and August.

TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE'S FOURTH YEAR

–*Eleanor Crowther and Chris Sullivan,
Coordinators*

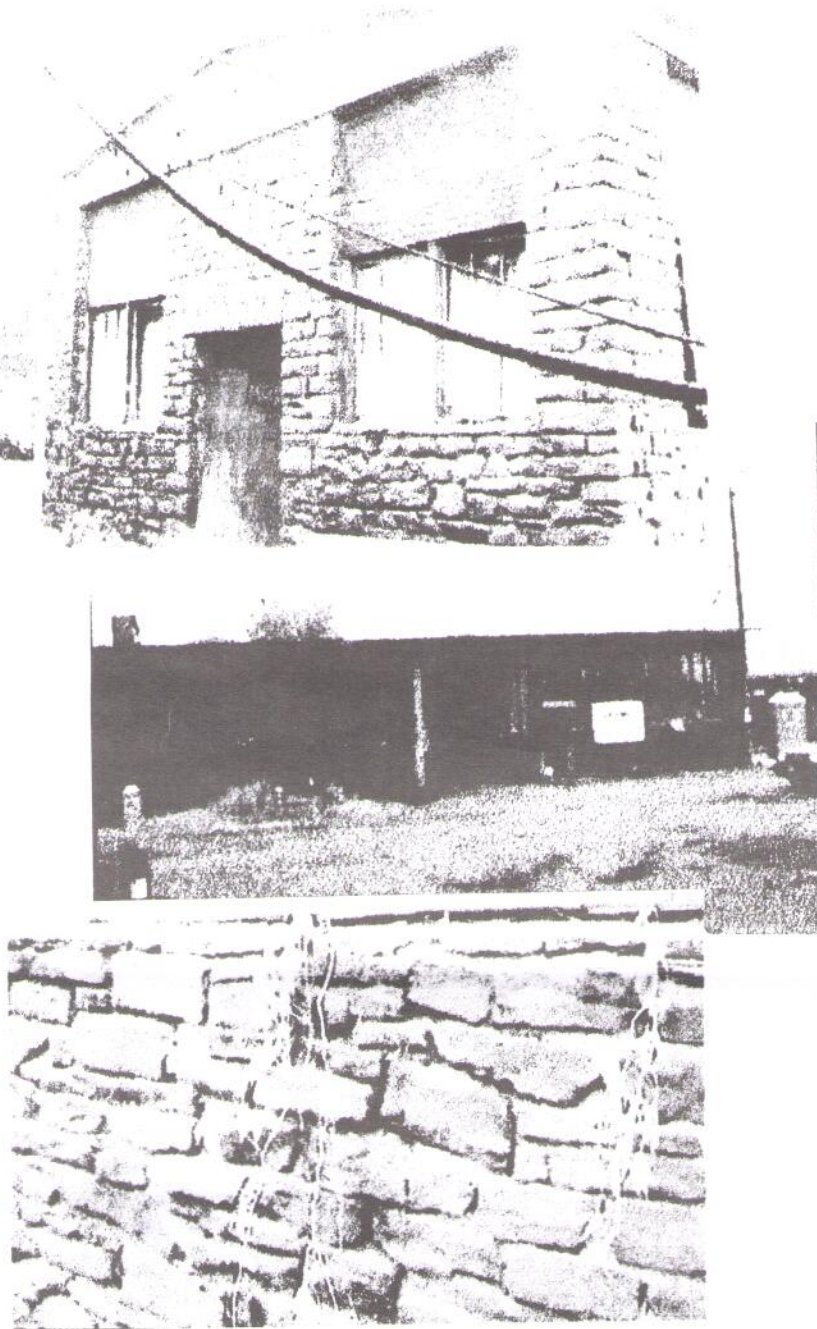
Another successful Town-Wide Tag Sale Day was held on May 13th. More than 60 tag-salers signed up, including 2 churches. There were many happy buyers and we provided a first class traffic jam downtown. Weather cooperated and proceeds edged up a bit. (All figures aren't in yet.)

Next year May 12th will be our fifth annual Town-Wide Tag Sale. Perhaps in honor of the occasion we will expand our program a bit. What do you think of a silent auction the night before or a consignment auction. Any other ideas?

Among those members who helped in advance preparation and during the day were: Marion Anderson, Marie Keser, Regina Woltmann, Kathryn Paradis, Charlie Woltmann, Linda Cunningham, Lin Masley, Bob McDougall, Ruth Freeburg, Sharon Bergman, Shirley Sullivan, George Wilson, Bud Harmon, Judy Pogmore, Jean and Don Kelsey, Elsie Hale, Laura Strong, John Gotta, Frank Sullivan, Bill and Connie McBrien, Fran DiNatalie, Judi and Jim Elder, Bill and Phyllis Frisbie, Eleanor and Pat Crowther, Bill and Chris Sullivan. But this doesn't include the many bakers for the bake sale and the 32 businesses who bought ads to defray the map costs. Many thanks to you all!

DEMOLITION ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Two old industrial buildings at 309 Airline Avenue, owned by Vig Industries (Vigoro fertilizer) built of brownstone tailings will be demolished next week. With the help of Selectman Jim Hill, who did a complete photographic documentation, and Nan Zimmer, Main Street Committee, the structures were surveyed for adaptive reuse. We were reluctant to see them disappear as we believe these are the only brownstone Industrial buildings remaining in Portland. But given the building's present condition, the impossibility of moving a 23,000 square foot structure and its history of chemical use, there was a general consensus to agree to the demolition. In order to preserve the masonry style, Nancy Mueller, Assistant Town Planner, suggested that we ask for some small exterior wall sections to use in an outdoor display of brownstone masonry methods at the Brownstone Quarry Park. The demolition contractor has agreed, if it is possible.



GIFTS TO THE HOUSE AND MUSEUM

A nice, white kitchen stove was donated by Myron and Jane Foster to replace the rusted one that had been in the Callander House.

A copier was received from Doris and Bruce Heerdt.

Historic items include:

Committee badges from the Arrigoni Bridge opening August 6, 1938 and the 1941 Portland Centennial celebration from Ernest and Phyllis Peterson.

WANGUNKS NOW?

1999-2000 OFFICERS

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The publicity regarding a casino venture by a Norwich veterans organization using the Wangunks tribal heritage has raised interest in the tribe's present state. East Hampton artist Gary O'Neil says his Wangunk family living in Middlesex County numbers more than seventy. Their genealogy has been traced to the late seventeen hundreds. Two other Wangunks from California can trace their ancestry directly to Chief Sowheag who signed the 1672 land sale to Portland (East Middletown). A number of other members are in the Midwest.

TRI-TOWN DISPLAYS PORTLAND PICTURES

Tri-Town Supermarket in Portland had added old pictures of Portland to its walls as part of their recent renovation. Owner Edward Scharr, and his sister Sandy, worked with Chris Sullivan to select appropriate pictures from our files which were then enlarged to about 2' by 3'. If you were too busy choosing groceries to notice, remind yourself to look up and admire the scenes.

NEWSLETTER – *Phyllis and Bill Frisbie, 6/7/00*

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