



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O.Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

FEBRUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT -

Martha Lutecki, 860-342-3212

First of all, I would like to say that I'm honored to serve as President of the Portland Historical Society this year. We are looking forward to another busy and successful year. Thanks to all of you for your constant support of the Society's work and your gifts and loans of artifacts to the Museum.

A special thanks to our Exhibit Committee for their work on the Museum's Holiday Display. Some of our exhibitors are already planning "next year". At the request of Gildersleeve Elementary School, we are assembling an exhibit featuring local geological artifacts for their spring visit. If you have any "rocks" that you think might interest our third-grade visitors, let us know!

Bob McDougall presented a very interesting program in January of Museum acquisitions received in 2005. To date, he and his group have inventoried more than 4200 items! (At the meeting, the

Sandborns donated a framed picture of the 1930 Portland High School senior class at Mount Vernon during their Washington trip.)

Eleanor Crowther has begun planning for the Town-Wide Tag Sale on the second Saturday in May. This is our major fund-raiser to support the Callander House Museum and much to our surprise it's the tenth anniversary of "Tag Sale Day". We started with forty families on our Town-Wide map ten years ago and last year had 130 households and social groups holding sales all over town!

As always, we have a lot of work to do and would welcome volunteers who would like to take part in any of our projects to call me. These are not major commitments, but are a wonderful way to help us ensure the preservation of Portland's history and to meet others with similar interests.

I look forward to working with you all!



For those who missed the Christmas Exhibit at the Museum, this is a tiny taste of the train (lower level) and trolley (upper level) show built and operated by Tom Ladny in a spectacular display. The white "ghost train" and Portland's Main St. trolley were designed and built by Tom.

*10TH annual town-wide tag sale day
Saturday, May 13, 2006*

CONNECTICUT ARTIST: *John Wells Stancliff (1814 - 1891)*
Painter of “The First House in Portland”, donated by Helen & David Carlson

Stancliff was born and bred in Portland, CT. when the town was known as Chatham. He had training as a carriage painter and copper-plate engraver. (The Buck Carriage Co. was active in Portland at this time, making handsome painted carriages for southern gentlemen. They may have trained Stancliff.) He later studied painting with Alexander Emmons and Jared B. Flagg, and water-color with Benjamin Coe.

From 1845 until 1848, he ran a daguerreotype business in Hartford; his ad boasted of two silver medals and three years running as “best daguerreotype portraits and miniatures”, according to a “Committee of Fine Arts”.

About 1849 he left Hartford for Louisville, Kentucky, where he managed the telegraph office. Later, he returned to Hartford as Superintendent of the local telegraph office, a job he held until 1868. H. W. French says that Stancliff, about this time, taught the first public school drawing classes in America.

In 1873, he was listed in the city directory as a Marine Painter. The Hartford Courant reported that Stancliff was “quietly copying marine views and planning to travel the east coast to do marine sketches”. Later the Courant said he was on a coastal cruise making studies of shore and surf.

At an 1873 exhibition of the new CT School of Design he showed 7 pictures. By 1878, local newspapers were reporting on his progress with regularity. He seemed constantly to improve, one reporter wrote and that he was especially good at depicting water in motion.

Stancliff was a prolific painter who showed some 30-40 works at a time in his downtown Hartford studio.

In 1879, he went on a sketching voyage to Hudson Bay. In 1880, he exhibited at the National Academy of Design, and in 1888, his studio was filled with marine works said to be the result of his six years of study of the Atlantic coast.

At his death in 1891, there was a well publicized and well attended sale of his works. His paintings, all marines, were popular and sold well.



(House of James Stancliff, Stonecutter)
“The First House in Portland”
by John Wells Stancliff

One source claims that Stancliff was also a baseball player; but, he seems only to have participated in one or two exhibition games in Hartford between regular ball players and rank amateurs. Stancliff, as an amateur, was a member of the “Muffins”, who were honorary members of the Hartford Charter Oaks team. The Hartford Courant found Stancliff’s attempts to play short-stop “amusing”.



“Short Beach, Branford, Conn.”
J. W. Stancliff, 1873
Painting in Mattatuck Museum collection,
Waterbury, CT

10th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale
Sponsored by The Portland Historical Society, Inc.
Benefiting the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History

PLAN A TAG SALE

Saturday, May 13th

8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

RAIN OR SHINE

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

- The Historical Society will help to promote your Tag Sale.
- Your contributions will help fund Historical Society Museum.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE:

- ☛ Location Maps
- ☛ Advertising w/sale item types
- ☛ House Marker Sign
- ☛ Advertising
- ☛ Tag Sale Hints

Option	How it works:	Sign up by April 15th	Sign up April 16 - 30
1.	Have a sale at your own home or neighborhood for your benefit.	\$20.	\$25.
or 2.	Tailgate at Hemlock Grange parking area, jct. Rte. 17 & Sage Hollow Rd.	\$20.	\$25.
or 3.	Donate items to benefit the Historical Society tag sales at Hemlock Grange and Callander House. (No clothing, textbooks, or unwieldy items, please.)	Items may be delivered to the Society Saturdays, April 22, 29, & May 6 at Callander House garage, 492 Main St. from 9-11 AM. Pickup also available. Call 342-3636.	

ALSO BAKE & TAG SALES with coffee, soda & hot dogs at Hemlock Grange, 17 Sage Hollow Road on Tag Sale Day.



*Clip and mail to Portland Historical Society Tag Sale, P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT, 06480
 Make checks payable to: Portland Historical Society*

Contact Information: Name:	Options (Please check all that apply)	<u>Before</u> April 16	April- 16 - 30
Sale Address:	<input type="checkbox"/> Home sale	\$20.	\$25.
Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Tailgate at Grange	\$20.	\$25.
Will you have Tag Sale if it rains? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Circle Home Sale Type: toys/tools/misc./_____		

NOTES . . .

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE

Eleanor Crowther, 342-2907, Ruth Freeburg, 342-3636

Encourage friends to plan their own tag sales.
 Donate items to the Historical Society's Tag Sales.
 Contribute to the May 13 Bake Sale at the Grange.
 Help deliver numbered house poles May 10th in PM.



Pat Crowther:
 Chief Pole Maker

PORTLAND HISTORY

QUESTION - 1776

Victor Mays, a Clinton artist, has been asked by the CT River Museum in Essex to paint a picture of the Frigate "Trumbull", one of the first Continental War Vessels, (70 tons with 36 guns), on the building ways at the Bush Shipyard in Chatham (Portland). The picture will be part of their Spring Exhibit, "Launching Liberty".

The Bush Shipyard was at the foot of Silver Street, about where the Brainerd Quarry was. Mays is interested in any old maps of the riverfront or contemporary accounts of the launching. He is also interested in what the Middletown shore looked like at that time. If you have any information, let us know, and we'll pass it on.

CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

- Coloring & Activity Book of Portland History \$5.
- "Images of Portland" book by Bob McDougall . . . \$20.
- Callander House Stoneware Jar \$25.
- 2006 Heritage Calendar. \$6.
- Antique Portland Picture Magnets (3/4x2-5/8)
 picture list available, \$2 ea., 3/\$5, set of 20/\$30.
- Portland Scenes Notepad (50 pgs., 5 scenes) . . . \$3.
- Portland Scenes Tea Towel \$6.
- Meshomasic Forest Video (John LeShane) \$5.

Please include \$2. shipping for each \$10 of order.

Our Ways & Means Chair, Susanne Anderson, (342-0433) is weighing new projects for this year. One may be an Open-House Tour, contrasting antique and modern Portland houses. The tour would combine a few of our antique treasures with a few houses from our new neighborhoods. If you have suggestions, please call her.



CIVIL WAR RAINCOAT

By request, we are exhibiting the Civil War Raincoat worn by G. W. Stewart, (AKA: Bill Stewart). Originally from Scotland, after the Civil War, he came home with a Portland friend, a member of the Somerset family who lived in the farmhouse on the left side of William Street as you go down the hill. Stewart liked the town so much that he spent the rest of his life here, marrying two local ladies of the Lewis and Pierce families, (not at the same time!), and raising his only son.

The coat was given to the Society by Helen Hedstrom Carlson whose grandparents bought the Somerset family house in about 1900.

To complement the raincoat, Elsie Hale has given the Society the complete Civil War service record of her Step-Grandfather, William Jacques who served from 1861 to 1865, and a photo of him in uniform.



*William Jacques,
 Civil War Veteran*

IS YOUR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP CURRENT FOR 2006?

We've listed below paid-up members as of early February for the current year. If you're not listed, check the Mailing label on this Newsletter. If "Life" appears, your life membership has been paid. If "2006" (or later) appears, you have paid your dues for this year. Otherwise, the last year for which we have received dues is shown.

The Society needs you as a contributing member. Not only financially, but also with your suggestions, your help and your knowledge of Portland's past. Dues: (Individual \$10; family \$20; lifetime \$250) should be mailed to: Portland Historical Society, Inc., P.O.Box 98, Portland, CT 06480. Call me, Bill Frisbie (860-342-0303) if you have questions.

Dorothy J. Ahlberg	Jim & Judi Elder	George & Carolyn Johnson	Barbara Petroske
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Judith Gildersleeve duPont	Charles B. Johnson	John & Marlene Peterson	Nancy C. Zimmer

CALENDAR . . .

- February 28 - "Lake Hitchcock" - Herbert Duey, local Geologist - video and discussion of the Ice Age in the Connecticut River Valley.
- March 28 - "Tara's Thistle" - Musical entertainment - Irish/Scottish music/bagpipers at Senior Center.
- April 25 - "Historic Homes of the CT River Valley" - Don Malcarne presents slide show and discussion of the great houses of the valley.
- May 13 - TOWN-WIDE TAG SALE, 8:30 AM TO 2:30 PM
- May 23 - "Local Geology" - Presentation by Herbert Duey of geological artifacts of the Portland area.
- June 27 - Potluck Picnic

All programs are held at the Portland Library, Mary Flood Room, at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise indicated.

NEWSLETTER - *Phyllis and Bill Frisbie, 2-21-06*



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

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Newsletter!