



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O.Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

SEPTEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Martha Lutecki

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. We are expecting a busy fall!

Brownstone Quorum Festival - The Museum will be exhibiting Brownstone pictures and artifacts on September 16 from 11 AM to 4 PM plus antique wedding gowns.

Portland Fair weekend - October 6, 7, 8 the Society will exhibit school class pictures again. We need volunteers to cover our booth Friday evening 5-10 pm; Saturday 9 am to 10 pm; and Sunday 10 am to 5. Please call me (342-3212) if you can volunteer for a 2 or 3 hour shift. Think sun!!!

House Tour (See pg. 3) - Over the summer a group of Society members have collaborated to arrange a tour of Portland Homes Sunday, October 22, 2006. Our Chair-person, Sue Anderson has done an outstanding job coordinating this event which I am sure will be an interesting fund-raiser. We will need donations of finger-food for the tea at Trinity Church - call Joan at 342-1122.

2007 Calendar - Bob McDougall and Doris Sherrow-Heidenis are busy putting the finishing touches on the 2007 Calendar which will have more information on the buildings featured on the Tour of Homes, and will be available on Tour Day, October 22nd.

Museum - Stop at the Museum to see our latest exhibit - "Wedding Fashions through the Ages" which features gowns and other memorabilia from local weddings dated in the 1800s to the present. As always, our Exhibit Committee has done a wonderful job preparing this unique display which complements the theme for the Tour of Homes - "Yesterday and Today".



Mrs. Butler goes to the fair - c. early 1900s.

Programs - We have some interesting programs planned for this fall and we hope to see you at our meetings at the Portland Library which are open to all. See page 4.

Nominating Committee - We need 3 or 4 people to serve on the Nominating Committee to create a slate of Officers and Directors for our Annual Meeting, November 14th. Anyone interested call me at 342-3212.



“YESTERDAY & TODAY”


SAMPLE THE ARCHITECTURE OF THREE CENTURIES!


PORTLAND OPEN-HOUSE TOUR


Sunday, October 22nd, 12 to 5 pm



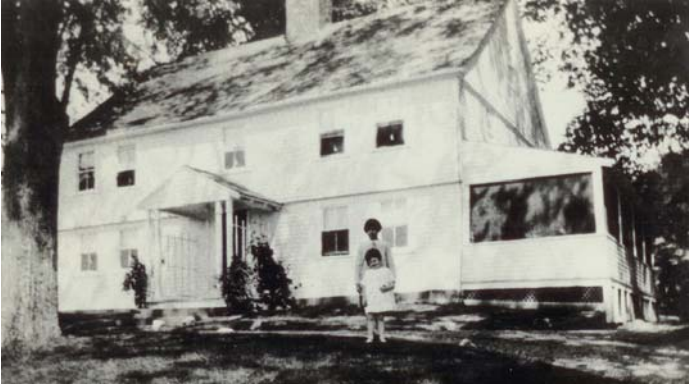






NOTES . . .

RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM John F. Conklin, Sun City, AZ containing a photo taken in the early 1930s of the George Wilcox house that stood on Wilcox Hill Road before it burned. The photo shows Alfreda Wilcox standing in front with Betty Conklin.



John says: "I remember (the house) well as I spent many of my younger years each summer helping on the farm. It was a great house, and according to family legend, it had early in its life been a stage coach stop on the route to Boston."

He also says "we still own a little piece of property on Wilcox Road on the left side going in, just before the bridge over the brook. George Wilcox gave it to my father so that he would always have a place to fish."

WEDDING DRESSES: Many thanks are due to the kind people who donated or loaned gowns, pictures and related items for our exhibit. Presently we are showing 16 gowns.

We also want to thank all the helpers who created the design details to show the gowns: Walter Dower, whose wooden constructions became the basis for chicken wire dress bodies, Claire Frisbie for allowing us to wrap her in three layers of duct tape to create a form, and Chris Sullivan, Vivian Dower, Martha Lutecki, and Regina Woltmann who helped to collect and arrange the exhibit.

WHEATLEY THEME. Lois Wheatley, Athens, Ohio, sent an interesting paper (prepared for an Ohio University course), describing early Connecticut settlement, relations to the Indians, and the family route to Ohio.

Her branch of the Ranney family arrived in Middletown Upper Houses (Cromwell) in 1659. Members settled in East Middletown (Portland) in 1717, living near the present Prospect Street. They allied themselves with many local families, Hubbards, Turners, Millers, Dixons and Bucks. Later generations were drawn to life in the Connecticut "Western Reserve Land" in Ohio. Copies of the paper are available at the Museum.

HOLIDAY exhibit planning will begin soon. We have recently been offered a loan of 3 doll houses for the December exhibit from Fran DiNatale. If you have some houses begging to be displayed, leave a message for us at the Museum, 342-5455.

CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

- Coloring & Activity Book of Portland History \$5.
- "Images of Portland" book by Bob McDougall . . . \$20.
- Callander House Stoneware Jar \$25.
- 2007 Heritage Calendar. (when available) \$6.
- Previous years calendars \$5.
- 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.

SELF-GUIDED OPEN-HOUSE TOUR

Plans are well underway by the Historical Society for a house tour fundraiser. The self-guided tour, "**Yesterday and Today**", features Portland homes from the 1700's through the present, will be held Sunday, October 22 from 12 noon to 5 p.m., rain or shine.

The tour will include **nine beautiful homes plus Trinity Church, and the Ruth Callander House Museum** of Portland History. Guides will point out architectural details and points of interest in each of the owner-occupied homes and buildings on the tour.

A highlight of the tour will be the **George Gillum, Jr. House** located on Main Street, **owned by James and Martha McCabe**. Three rooms in the original home built in 1850 will be open for public viewing with local artisans displaying their crafts. The show-case will include reproduction and antique dolls, sculptures, quilts, and bonsai trees. Also on this property is a large copper beech tree which has been registered on the Connecticut's Notable Tree List maintained by Connecticut College in New London.

The **Daniel Russell House, circa 1855**, now the Greystone Residential Care Home **owned by Lucille Swanson**, is one of Portland's few good examples of high style late Italianate architecture. Several new additions to the property, most recently in 2005, elegantly blend the old Italianate and new contemporary styles. Greystone will be open to tour visitors from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Among the earlier homes on the tour is the **Elisha Covell House**, a stately Greek Revival, circa 1856, **owned by John and Susan Decina**. According to local legend, this home may have been part of the under-ground railroad as it has a hidden trapdoor in one the bedrooms.

The **Jarvis House, owned by Michael Gambaccini and Ian Tovey**, is a charming Victorian furnished with late 19th century furniture and period lighting. The home retains many original features such as an exquisite built-in fretwork screen and battery operated servants call bells.

Two homes built in the early 1900's are also featured on the tour. The **Cornwall Farmhouse of Richard and Judy Lane**, a two-story colonial, is stylishly decorated with many antiques and collectibles. The tobacco barn on the grounds will be open for public viewing. The **Edwin G. Camp House, an elegant Georgian style colonial owned by Thomas and Linda Melia**, is nestled on the hillside overlooking historic Main Street. The entire house including a carriage/pool house and beautiful gardens may be toured.

Two of the new homes on the tour were built in 2005 as part of the HOBI Award winning Bartlett Hill subdivision for active adults. The traditional or "Dorset" model, **owned by Dick and Elaine Carella**, offers spacious rooms, a hand-painted mural and scenic hillside views. The new cape or "Berkshire" model, **home to Myron and Jane Foster**, is attractively decorated with an early American theme featuring many collectibles.

The newest home on the tour, completed this year for **Peter and Jeannette Scianna**, is designed around an expansive English conservatory overlooking spectacular views of the Connecticut River and beyond. The use of glass, natural light and modern layout make this a showcase home.

The Society's Museum, the oldest house on the tour (1715), will be open for visitors and features a special exhibit of wedding fashions and memorabilia from the 1800's through the present. A tour of the museum's grounds will also allow guests to view The Betty Keser Scott Garden designed, planted, and maintained by the Portland Garden Club.

Trinity Church will be open for tours and light refreshments from 2 to 5 p.m. Donations of baked goods from society members would be greatly appreciated. Please call Joan at 342-1122.

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Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the tour. Advance tickets can be purchased by mailing the order form below or by calling Sue, 342-0433; Joan, 342-1122; Judi, 342-3397 or Nancy, 342-0583. Tickets also available at the Museum on open days.

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ORDER FORM - PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOUSE TOUR - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2006 - 12 NOON TO 5 PM	
NAME _____	NUMBER OF TOUR TICKETS ORDERED _____ X \$20 TOTAL \$ _____
ADDRESS _____	<i>Make check payable to: Portland Historical Society, and mail with form to:</i>
CITY, ST, ZIP _____	<i>Portland Historical Society, P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT, 06480.</i>
PHONE _____	

CALENDAR . . .

- September 16 - Brownstone Festival - Museum open 11 am to 4 pm.
- September 26 - Cora Murray of the Connecticut Historical Commission will present "*the Underground Railroad in Connecticut*".
- October 1 - Museum open from 2 pm to 4 pm.
- October 6, 7, 8 - Portland Agricultural Fair - *Historical Society Booth*
- October 22 - Tour of Homes "*Yesterday and Today*"
- October 24 - Doris Sherrow-Heidenis and Bob McDougall present slide show and talk "*Center Cemetery in Portland*".
- November 5 - Museum open 2 pm to 4 pm. Last day of Wedding Exhibit.
- November 14 - Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner, 6 pm, Hemlock Grange

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

NEWSLETTER - *Phyllis and Bill Frisbie, 9-15-06*



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

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Newsletter!