

THE STRATFORD Bard



Photo by Michael Kolster

The Soldier's and Sailor's Monument on Academy Hill is dedicated to veterans of the Civil War. It was erected in October 1889 in time for Stratford's 250th anniversary celebration.

The statue overlooks Christ Episcopal Church and the Vietnam War Memorial which can be seen at the right.

350th

Founder's Day Parade Issue

✓ Stratford's 350th Commission announces a 350th Founder's Day Parade will take place on Saturday, Oct. 7, beginning at 11 a.m. at Textron Lycoming.

The marching units will proceed north on Main Street to the Town Hall.

The 350th anniversary parade will feature Melanie Bike as Grand Marshal.

Town History

✓ On pages 14 and 15, starting with 1639, a chronological listing of special dates in Stratford's history are recalled.

Special insert

✓ In a special insert, the 350th Trolley Tour is laid out and can be followed quite easily. The tour is self-paced and can be taken at any time.

About the issue

✓ The *Stratford Bard* and the Stratford 350th Commission have been working very closely on this special section.

On Saturday, October 7, 1989, the final day of the Tercentenary Week, the townspeople witnessed what was probably the biggest and most elaborate parade ever held in Stratford. It included more than 2,000 marchers, 23 floats and nine military units.

On October 7, 1989 in observance of Founders Day and the 350th Anniversary of the town of Stratford, there will be a Founders Day Parade.

Church bells will ring on October 7 at 11 a.m. proclaiming Founders Day 1989.

Let the celebration begin!





Photo by Marianne Yeomans

Members of Stratford's Senior Services and Community Services prepare their float at the Baldwin Center for the 350th Celebration Founder's Day Parade on Saturday.

Founder's Day floats slated for 350 parade

The following is the tentative list of groups, businesses and organizations that have sponsored floats for the 350th Founders' Day Parade.

THE BRIDGEPORT CAMERA CLUB, celebrating their 75th year, has sponsored the Camera Float.

THE BOOTHE PARK COMMISSION has sponsored the Olde Fashioned Boothe Park Wagon Float, with mounted artifacts, and members in period costumes.

FAMILY HEALTH NETWORK has sponsored the Baby Cradle Float featuring historical buildings in town.

THE HOUSATONIC BOAT CLUB has sponsored the Sail Boat Floats.

THE SHORT BEACH BIMBO BEACH CLUB has sponsored the Beach Scene float, complete with bathing beauties.

THE STRATFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION has sponsored the float entitled "Quality Schools Begin with Me," featuring a large three dimensional apple.

STRATFORD SENIOR SERVICES AND STRATFORD COMMUNITY SERVICES have joined forces to bring "Stratford - A Town for all Ages," to you, featuring youths and adults interacting.

TEXTRON LYCOMING sponsors it's Barnum Festival Winning Sesame Street Float.

THE 350TH COMMISSION sponsors the Birthday Cake Float - "Happy birthday, Stratford!"

UNITED ILLUMINATING company has sponsored the Peter Pan Pirate Ship Float.

THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA has reproduced the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington for the parade.

Many area bands, units scheduled for Founder's Day

The following is a tentative list of those bands and marching units, from Stratford and neighboring towns, who are participating in the 350th Founders' Day Parade.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Bridgeport Sherriffs Department | Marching Unit |
| Bunnell High School Band | High School Band |
| Central High School Band | High School Band |
| Connecticut Alumni Band | Drum Corps |
| Connecticut Blues Sr. | Fife & Drum |
| Connecticut Hurricanes | Drum Corps |
| Deep River Ancients Sr. | Fife & Drum |
| East Lyme High School Band | High School Band |
| Gaelic Highland | Bagpipes |
| Gospel Singers | |
| Grassy Plains | Drum Corps |
| Hartford V.F.W. | Children's Fife & Drum |
| Junior Colonial | Fife & Drum |
| Marquis of Grandby Jr. | Fife & Drum |
| Mattatuck Drum Band | Drum Corps |
| Milford Volunteers Ancient | Fife & Drum |
| Nathan Hale Ancient Sr. | Fife & Drum |
| Naugatuck High School Band | High School Band |
| New York Ancients Sr. | Fife & Drum |
| St. John's Colonial Fife & Drum | Fife & Drum |
| St. Peter's | Fife & Drum |
| Skyliners | |
| Sommers High School Band | High School Band |
| Spirit of Black Rock Sr. | Fife & Drum |
| Stratford Army National Guard | Marching Unit |
| Stratford High School Band | High School Band |
| Stratford V.F.W. | Marching Unit |
| Trumbull High School Band | High School Band |
| University of Connecticut | College Band |
| Warren Harding High School | High School Band |
| Waterbury P.A.L. | Marching Unit |
| Westbrook Drum Corps | Drum Corps |

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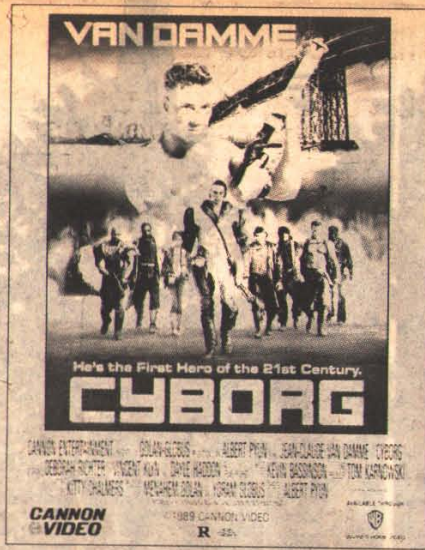


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Chief thanks Parade planners

Chief of Police Robert Mossman, Chairman of the 350th Founders' Day Parade, wishes to thank his committee members:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Dick Blake, Floats | John Corb, Control |
| Bill Decker, Specials | Mary Hardy, Churches/Civic Organizations |
| Vivienne Knapp, Historical Units | Jim Miller, High School Bands |
| Terry Moore, Dignitaries | Bill Morrison, Marching Units |
| Gioia Marinaccio, Staff | |

Special thanks also to Tom Fahy, Mark Corvino, Debbie Noack, Millie Kelly, Jo Sobolewski, and members of the Barnum Festival.



Photo by Dorothy Euerle

Founder's Day Parade Committee

From left: Bill Morrison, Vivienne Knapp, Police Chief Robert Mossman, Richard Blake and Gioia Marinaccio. Missing from photo are: John Corb, Bill Decker, Mary Hardy, Jim Miller, and Terry Moore.

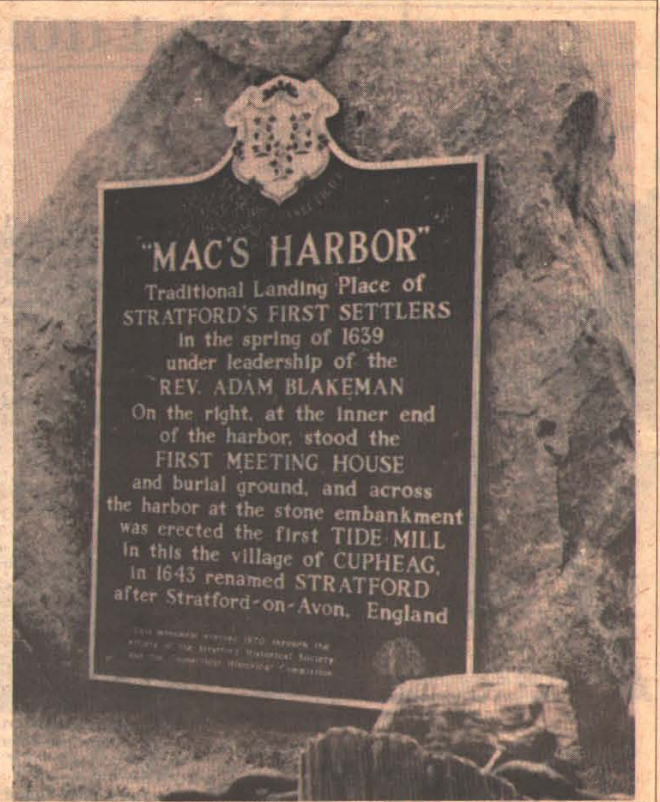


Photo courtesy of Barbara Strotz

Where it all began

This is Mac's Harbor which is considered the landing spot of Stratford's first settlers in 1639.

CONTINUE THE MUSICAL SPIRIT OF THE DAY

10th ANNUAL
CAVALCADE OF BANDS

YOU'VE SEEN SOME OF THEM
IN THE PARADE, NOW SEE
THEM ON THE FIELD OF COMPETITION.

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- ★ CHESHIRE HIGH, CT.
- ★ EAST LYME HIGH, CT.
- ★ GREENWICH HIGH, CT.
- ★ MAHOPAK HIGH, N.Y.

- ★ NAUGATUCK HIGH, CT.
- ★ NORWALK HIGH, CT.
- ★ PORTCHESTER HIGH, N.Y.
- ★ SOMER HIGH, N.Y.
- ★ STONINGTON HIGH, CT.
- ★ SOUTHLINGTON HIGH, CT.
- ★ TRUMBULL HIGH, CT.



Bands

SATURDAY OCT. 7 5:00 P.M.
BUNNELL FIELD

AND AS A SPECIAL PRESENTATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT MARCHING
BAND IN AN EXHIBITION PERFORMANCE.





Photo by Michael Koletzer

Beautification

The Stratford Chamber of Commerce-sponsored program to beautify Main Street began with the installation of the brick esplanade and period lighting from Hard's Corner to the flag pole in the Center. Proceeds from the 350th Airshow in August were earmarked to pay for this project.

Many special units are slated to appear in what is to be the biggest and best parade Stratford has seen. The parade begins at 11 a.m. starting at Textron Lycoming and ending at Town Hall.



Special units to perform in parade

The following is a list of special units scheduled to participate in the 350th Founder's Day Parade.

- ABC Nursery School and Kindergarten
- Angela's Country Kitchen Restaurant
- J.F. Barrett and Sons
- Chapel Street PTA
- Cheshire Dog Training Club
- Crime Watch of Stratford, Inc.
- Cruisin' East Car Club
- John and Elizabeth Curtis/Curtiss Society
- Disabled American Veterans of Stratford, Charles K. Merritt #20
- Girl Scout Troop #69
- Governor's Horse Guard, 2nd Company
- Society of the Hawley Family
- Milford Police Honor Guard
- Nichols Elementary School
- Order of the Eastern Star — Azalia Chapter #2
- Pyramid Temple Motor Patrol (Shriners)
- RAP Session for Disabled People

- Youth Group of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church
- Sawdust Clowns, Alley 66
- Sterling House Community Center, Cordelia Sterling Unit
- Sterling House Community Center, Laura Lee Twirlers and Pom Pom Girls
- Stratford Police Color Guard
- Stratford Police S.W.A.T.
- Stratford Police K-9
- Stratford Rams Pee Wee Football Team
- Stratford Steeler Football
- WCUM — AM 1450
- WYNY - FM Country 103.5
- St. Mark Church
- Stratford Historical Society
- St. Joseph's Church of Stratford
- Family Health Network
- First Congregational Church
- Stratford Baptist Church
- Lordship Fathers Club
- Stratford Volunteer Fire Company

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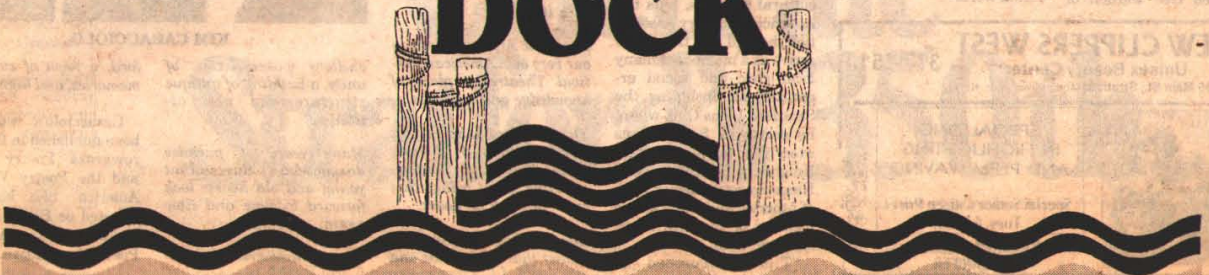
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- Staples
- Super Stop & Shop
- TCBY
- Walgreen's
- and The 350th Store

Tree Warden labored to save Stratford Elms

The mighty elm, a symbol of Stratford's heritage, nearly became extinct in the late '40s. The devastating effects of Dutch Elm disease, which ravaged the stately trees, resulted in hundreds of species being cut down and lost forever.

Fortunately for Stratford, the town Tree Warden was Theodore "Tim" Janosko, an active conservationist, who began his tree surgeon career in 1931.

In 1941, he qualified for state licensing after completing special courses at Yale and The University of Connecticut. He was named as a member of the Examining Board of the Connecticut Tree Protective Association in 1942.

Continuing his education and special training, he became an authority and lecturer in New England on the plight of the Dutch Elm tree. In 1946 Janosko was appointed tree warden of

Stratford and held that position until his retirement in 1961.

While serving as tree warden, Janosko spearheaded an extensive plan for the treatment of Dutch Elm disease, which included the injection of a special solution to the roots of the Elms. Although this treatment was in the experimental stage, it was credited with saving hundreds of Elm trees.

The loss in Stratford alone in 1947 was 275 Elm trees and in 1949 after his treatment Stratford lost only 11 Elms.

Hearing of his success in saving Stratford's Elms, Janosko was sought after as a speaker and traveled extensively to areas affected by the blight. Ancient Elms on many town greens throughout the country thrived for many years as a result of his dedicated work.

Janosko also was president of Janosko Tree Service, which he founded. His skills as a tree surgeon and general knowledge in his field has a permanent memorial in the planting, growth and condition of trees in Stratford.

Janosko, as many old-timers will attest, was credited by the town with establishing Longbrook Park. An ardent sports fan, he played football throughout the area in his youth, but he is best known, in the sports arena, as manager of the Holy Name Club.

It was this team that graded the area now known as Longbrook Park and petitioned the town to install bleachers and to fence in the area.

Busy as he was with holding membership in seven tree and horticultural societies, plus the American Forestry Association, he still had time to be active as a member of many local civic and social organizations, including the Stratford Lions Club where he portrayed Santa Claus every year for the children, Knights of Columbus, Holy Name Society, Anchor Club of America and was a active member of the Mill River Country Club.

"Tim" succumbed to

cancer in 1966 at the age of 56. His untimely death created a tremendous void,

not only in the lives of his family, but to all who had the pleasure of knowing

him. "He was small in stature, but a giant of a man."

College student dedicates poem to Stratford's 350th

Kim Caracciolo, a senior majoring in English and literature at Western Connecticut State University, used her extraordinary talents in creating poetry to immortalize her hometown "Stratford" as a special tribute to the town's 350th birthday.

"After three-hundred fifty years of true heritage, special people, and strong will, the residents of Stratford look forward to a future of success..."

Captain David Judson House propped up on Academy Hill, open for historical tours, it glistens with its past.

Dramatic Arts portrayed in our very own American Festival Theatre, a place of knowledge and tradition.

The Stratford Library that has been erected to bring education and understanding to the beings that enter through its doors.

Sterling House Community Center that holds pride and



KIM CARACCIOLO

endless possibilities of unity, a building of antique structure and new attitudes.

Many years of parades down Main Street that young and old hearts look forward to time and time again.

Happy Anniversary Strat-

ford, a town of substance, memories, and high spirits.

Caracciolo's work has been published in the Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum and the Poetry Voices of America. She has been selected as Best New Poet of 1988 by the American Poetry Association.

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Historian's book updates town history

By Robert A. Cleary

PRIOR to his retirement from Sikorsky Aircraft in 1985, Stratford Town Historian Lewis Knapp decided "that Stratford needed a new history" to update William Howard Wilcoxson's *History of Stratford*.

The finished product, *In Pursuit of Paradise*, has now been published and is dedicated to Wilcoxson who published his work in conjunction with the town's tercentenary (300th anniversary) in 1939.

It was while working at Sikorsky, helping to design helicopters, that Knapp's interest in history germinated.

He said he realized

that "in order to define the future, one must understand the past."

Although Knapp was not present at the first historic flight of Sikorsky's S-300 50 years ago, he did witness several flights of the craft, piloted by Sikorsky himself, after he began working for the company in June, 1940.

Knapp started work on his history "in earnest" two years ago. He said that he first intended to write the entire book himself, but he soon discovered that "writing sometimes doesn't work that way."

He enlisted the aid of friends to write chapters or sections of the book on subjects in which they were expert.

"For example, John Kochiss, who is a marine historian, wrote the section on the Stratford oyster industry. He has written a book on that industry.

"And Dixon Merkt wrote the portion on the duck decoy carvers, a subject on which he has written a book," Knapp said.

Others who responded to Knapp's request and wrote portions of the book were Robert M.S. McDonald, Charlotte Dzujna, Joseph Quire, Paul G. Miller Sr. Raymond E. Jankowich, Miller Wachs, Dee Watt and Neil Sherman.

Knapp said in addition to Wilcoxson's book, he relied primarily on Samuel Orcutt's 1886 history, the collection of the Bridgeport Public Library, and the Stratford Historical Society's Coe Papers, which contain many newspaper clippings from the turn of the century.

In Pursuit of Paradise begins with the arrival of the first English settlers in "Pequannock" and concludes with a discussion of the

environmental, social and fiscal problems facing the town today. In between, the book covers the characters and the events that shaped the current day Stratford.

graph buffs racing.

The history is on sale at the Stratford Historical Society and at the 350th Store at the Dock. Its \$32.50 cost goes to the Historical Society

would be back to see him soon, and Wilcoxson replied "I'll be here tomorrow."

Eight days later, Wilcoxson died.

Knapp's dedication



Town Historian Lewis Knapp is seen signing copies of his book "In Pursuit of Paradise" at Town Hall with his wife Vivienne. The book updates Stratford's rich history in time for the 350th Celebration.

There is even a chapter on Stratford's geological past and a description of the lives of the Indians who inhabited the region prior to the advent of the settlers.

At exactly 350 pages in length, the book also contains about 400 illustrations and pictures, many of which will set the hearts of old photo-

which is the publisher.

Knapp said that more than 2,000 of the 4,000 copies printed have already been sold.

In August, Knapp took a copy of his history to show it and its dedication to the nonagenarian Wilcoxson. As he was leaving at the end of the visit, Knapp said he

might serve as a fitting epitaph for Wilcoxson, "who from 1934 to 1966 kept our records as town clerk, whose photographs recorded and preserved pictorial local history, and whose *History of Stratford* has for 50 years been the primary source of the history of our town."

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The Stratford Historical Society presented this cake to Knapp during a reception for Knapp. The Society is publisher of the book.

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 One quart Lemon Juice.
 Put Sugar to taste about 50 lbs.
 One & a half gallon St. Croix Rum
 half gallon Jamaica Rum.
 One pint bottle Benedictine.
 6 quarts Champagne.*

Make at least 24 hours before use.

*Decor with
 2 Navel Oranges scored & cut in slices.
 Small bottle imported U.S. Maraschino
 four bananas in long slices. Use
 small pine apple in quarters slices.*

*Made for the...
 BRIDGEPORT, CONN.
 SEA SIDE OUTING CLUB*

A page from the cookbook by Knapp.

Historical cookbook published

by Robert A. Cleary

Overshadowed in size but not in caloric content by her husband's Tricent-quinquenary history of the town of Stratford, *In Pursuit of Paradise*, is the culinary and literary offering of Vivienne Knapp, *Paradise Enon*.

Mrs. Knapp has collected, tested and, in some cases, quantified ingredients for 130 recipes in her historical cookbook, published by the Stratford Historical Society.

The recipes, which had to have been "at least 50 years old and from the Stratford area," were tested by about 20 volunteers.

According to the author's husband, Town Historian Lewis Knapp, after one of the punch recipes was used at a town reception, "early Stratford residents liked their drink."

This opinion was also shared by some of the attendees at that reception.

More than a 1,000 copies of *Paradise Enon* have been sold to date. The cookbook is on sale at the Historical Society, the 350th Store, and several area bookstores.



VIVIENNE KNAPP

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Sikorsky: Part of community this century

by Robert A. Cleary

WHEN the airport, which was to become Sikorsky Airport, unofficially opened in October 1928, it consisted of two grass 1,200 foot runways and a hanger, an office and the Happy Landing Inn restaurant.

Powered flight was already in the third decade of its existence in the Stratford area. There are some who maintain that, in 1901, Bridgeporter Gustave Whitehead made the first powered flight in Lordship, two years before the successful flight by the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk.

In 1912, using a hastily constructed field near what is now Paradise Green, a Army flying detachment proved the practicability of the airplane for scouting and reconnaissance in war games conducted in the area.

In its second decade, the aviation hotbed was the Bridgeport Aerodrome in Avon Park. When that area

became too populated, the daring young men and their fragile, often undependable flying machines moved to Lordship.

But, the men who had purchased 275 acres in Stratford's Great Meadows after World War I to build Bridgeport Airport had big plans. This was the age of the great flying boats and the leader was the Sikorsky Aviation Company, which built its factory adjacent to the airport the following year.

Sikorsky was already building the S-38 which could carry its two man crew and eight passengers 600 miles at a cruising speed of an amazing 100 miles per hour.

Commercial aviation believed that its future rested with the amphibian and later with the flying boat, which did not require an expensive airport, but just a suitable body of water.

For this reason, the plans for the fledgling airport included the dredging of a seaplane facility from the Housatonic River to ap-

proximately where Main Street is located.

When the airport formally opened 60 years ago in July 1929, it boasted lights for night flying and service facilities. In the decade of the 30's, when aviators were superstars, it was visited by the Lindberghs, the Chamberlains, the Earharts, the Gattys, the Hughes.

And, the airport, like the rest of the nation, was also visited by the Great Depression. The facilities fell into a state of disrepair, and the airport was closed in 1935.

Two years later, the abandoned airport was purchased by the city of Bridgeport for \$115,000 and reopened as Bridgeport Municipal Airport. That purchase unwittingly sowed the seeds for the fiscal border war between Bridgeport, the owner, and Stratford, the unwilling host. The tax impasse continues to the present with no sign of armistice or reparations.

During World War II, the airport became the birthplace and the proving grounds of the most effective and successful fighter plane to see action in the Pacific theater, the Vought-Sikorsky F4U-1 Corsair.

At the time of peak production, eight of the gull-winged fighters rolled off the assembly lines each day. A total of 11,415 Corsairs were built by the end of 1945, one of which is permanently enshrined at the airport entrance.

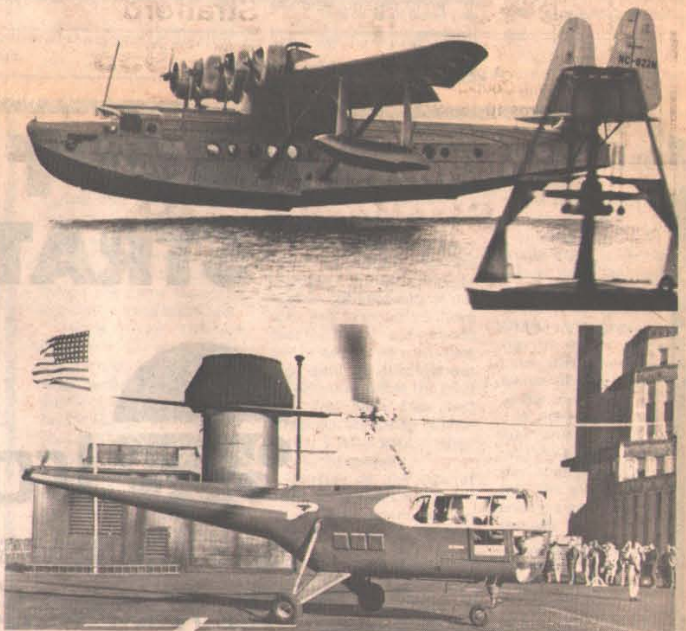
In 1973, the airport, the home of many private flyers and served by several feeder airlines, was renamed for Stratford's most illustrious aviation pioneer, Igor Sikorsky. A bust of the builder of the great flying boats and the father of vertical flight was unveiled in ceremonies at the airport in August of this year.

Tax issues are not the only problem interrupting the peaceful coexistence of airport and town. Stratford residents on the airport perimeter, particularly those in Lordship, are more than concerned about the noise pollution from their large neighbor. The decibellic output of the airport has increased in proportion to its popularity with commercial and private users, and the expanded air traffic as more businesses have located in the area.

This led to the formation of an Airport Noise Com-



Photos courtesy of Lewis G. Knapp
Boris Labensky, practical engineer, Igor Sikorsky "The Dreamer" and Serge Gluhareff, business manger, watch Les Morris fly the historic first flight of the VS-300 helicopter. Below, Sikorsky S42 Pam American Clipper is seen on a test flight at the mid-channel mark at the mouth of the Housatonic River. The Sikorsky S51 for Los Angeles Airways which was produced for the first commercial mail run is seen.



mittee which produced a formal noise abatement program. When put into effect, it is hoped the program will decrease overflights of residential areas. These are often caused by

pilots who take "short-cuts" in existing landing and take-off patterns which seek to avoid such areas. Sikorsky Airport has been a part of the Stratford experience for a small part

of the town's existence. The relationship between the airport and the town is, to say the least, ambivalent. It would seem that ambivalence will be present for some time to come.

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Dallas Brass to perform in Stratford

The Dallas Brass will present a public performance, sponsored by the Stratford Arts Commission, the Shakespeare Guild and Stratford's 350th Committee, on Thursday, Oct. 12, at 7:30 p.m. at Bunnell High School in Stratford.

With a national reputation for innovation and style, Dallas Brass brings a new and exciting dimension to the brass quintet: the shimmering sounds and effects of percussion. This unique instrumentation enables them to perform in an endless array of musical styles. Tickets for the Dallas Brass performance are available for \$10 at the 350th Store, Sterling House and the Baldwin Center.



THE DALLAS BRASS WILL PERFORM OCT. 12 AT BUNNELL HIGH SCHOOL.

350th towns unite in joint celebration

Stratford and Fairfield will join together for a 350th Gala Celebration on Friday, Oct. 27 at 8 p.m. at Ottavio's Restaurant in the Day's Hotel in Bridgeport.

Details have just been announced for this "extravagant affair," says Gioia Marinaccio, 350th Anniversary executive director. "It is sure to be remembered in Bridgeport, Stratford and Fairfield for some time to come."

"Enter Ottavio's balloon filled halls and see the gay colored dresses, the bright party atmosphere. Smell the different aromas drifting through the halls and hear the sound of music relaxing you, tantalizing you," said Marinaccio.

In the Grand Ballroom, "dance to the big band sound of the Paul King Orchestra while you enjoy a steamship round, sliced turkey, baked ham, chicken, champagne and lasagna. For a side dish, perhaps pasta primavera salad, tortellini carbonara or broccoli and spinach bread will whet your appetite," she suggests.

"Then move into the terrace room and let music of the '50s and '60s take you back as you enjoy all of the clams, shrimp and shrimp pate that you desire.

"On to Otto's main Restaurant and Lounge," said Marinaccio, "where the sounds of 'Old Socks and New Sneakers' will entertain you. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, crudite, shish kekobumaki, fried vegetables and an overflowing cheese bar. Finish it off with a lovely dessert at stations available in all three of the fun-filled rooms."

Marinaccio said an open bar will top it off. Cost is \$40 a person.

Lucie Farrell, the executive director of the Bridgeport Convention and Visitor's Commission, Otto L. Veglio, owner of Ottavio's at the Day's Hotel, Gerry Levine of Fairfield's 350th Commission and Gioia Marinaccio of Stratford's 350th Celebration have teamed up to make this "dream a reality."

"Bridgeport wanted to host this party for Stratford and Fairfield to help show the unity that truly exists between the three communities, the unity that has to be in order to promote the health and well-being of Bridgeport and, in turn, her surrounding towns," said Farrell.

Tickets to this extravaganza are limited, so call now for information. Everyone is invited. Call the 350th Store in Stratford at 375-1639 or Ottavio's in Bridgeport at 336-4226. In Fairfield, call Jackie Durrell's office at 255-8242.

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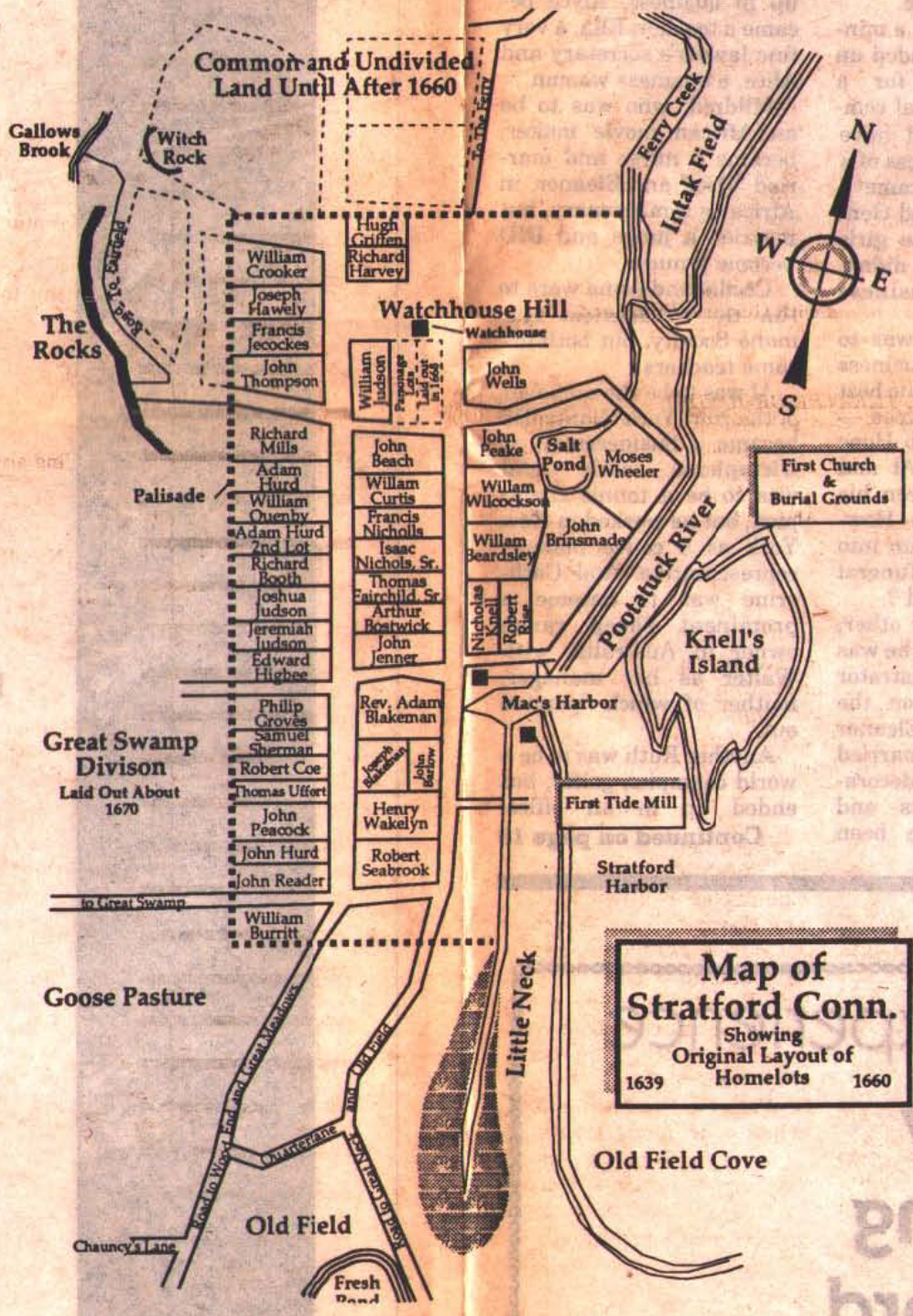
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THE BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

A cooperative project of the Stratford Chamber of Commerce,
an affiliate of The Bridgeport Regional Business Council

The History of Stratford



1637 — Flight of Pequots, through Cupheag, to last stand at Southport.

1638 — This territory granted by Indians to Connecticut Colony for security. Connecticut's first constitution drawn up by Roger Ludlow of Fairfield.

1639 — First 17 settler-farmers settled at Cupheag, led by the Reverend Adam Blakeman. First (now Congregational) church organized.

1640 — Settlement called "Cupheag." Boundaries ordered, settled by General Court.

1641 — About this time the first meeting house was erected at Sandy Hollow.

1642 — First representative (Philip Groves) sent to the General Government.

1643 — (Settlement first called "Stratford." Palisade built across Watch-house hill. Indians troublesome - 1644 — (watch kept nights and Sundays, militia called out several times - House built on the hill for these soldiers 1645 — (gave the name "Watch-house" to hill now called "Academy Hill.")

1646 — Stratford gave six pounds, fourteen shillings "to maintain poor scholars at Cambridge."

1647 — General Court ordered taxes of Stratford and Fairfield, formerly collected together as one plantation, to be collected separately.

1648 — Town plot laid out. Roger Ludlow asked General Court to permit Moses Wheeler to operate a ferry across what is now the Housatonic River.

1650 — Town records begin. Town voted to pay half the salary of a schoolmaster, the parents of pupils sent, to pay the rest.

1651 — Goody Bassett tried, and hanged, for witchcraft.

1652 — Voted that "the present meetinghouse be fortified as a place of safety for women and children in times of danger."

1653 — Establishment of ferry at what is now Washington Bridge.

1654 — Mill built at Old Mill Green by John Hurd Sr. and Thomas Sherwood Sr.

1655 — Trouble with Dutch and with Chief Ninigret of the Narraganset nation.

1656 — First Indian deed made. General Court confirmed right of soil to inhabitants.

1658 — General Court ordered planting land laid out for Indians, that peace should prevail.

1659 — Court assigned Golden Hill to Indians and settled titles of plantations. First purchase of land made in Stratford, for the town, by Moses Wheeler.

1660 — Mention made that the first meetinghouse had been using a bell to summon worshippers to services (other towns used a drum).

1661 — Joseph Judson made the Mohegan Hills land purchase for the town.

1662 — Long Hill purchase, which included most of Trumbull, Monroe and Easton. Connecticut and New Haven Colonies united under one charter.

1663 — James Blakeman sold mill at Old Mill Green and, the next year, built mill at what is now known as "Peck's Mill."

1664 — Dutch "New Amsterdam" became English "New York," causing peace of mind to Stratford and other nearby English settlements.

1665 — The Reverend Israel Chauncey called to assist the aged Rev. Adam Blakeman, who died this same year.

1666 — Difficulties arising in first church, a second ecclesiastical society was formed. Fairfield County, and three other counties, organized.

1667 — Permission granted to establish plantation at Newtown, soon abandoned.

1668 — Regulation, or "advice," of Governor accepted concerning voting privileges.

1669 — Liberty granted for both Congregational societies to use the same building for services at different times.

1670 — A "Select school" authorized.

1671 — White Hills purchase, for forty pounds.

1672 — Stratford people made settlement at Woodbury.

1673 — Militia companies of towns placed in county organizations.

1674 — Defenses strengthened against any emergency.

1675 — King Philip's War, — Men drafted, — provisions collected.

1676 — War ended.

1677 — Congregational burying ground laid out. Attempts to distribute lots on Golden Hill stopped.

1678 — Town voted twenty pounds to maintain a schoolmaster. General Court reaffirms grant to Indians at Golden Hill.

1679 — Boundary line settled between Fairfield and Stratford. General Court ordered that "present roads from plantation to plantation shall be reputed the country roads, or 'King's Highway.'"

1680 — Second Congregational church building

erected, placed on Watch House Hill. Tract at Coram Hill given to Indians.

1681 — Ceremony, under an oak near western boundary, at which final Indian deed was signed as authorized by General Court.

1683 — First Meetinghouse, at Sandy Hollow, torn down.

1684 — Settlement with Moses Wheeler about the land he had purchased in 1659.

1685 — Highway to Fairfield established by town act.

1686 — First ladder company — every householder in Stratford must provide a ladder to reach the top of his house. Wharfs provided and warehouses built.

1687 — First provision made by town for the support of public school instruction.

1688 — Patent, or charter, of town of Stratford, granted in 1686 by Governor and General Court, was recorded in the town records by Joseph Curtis.

1689 — Town ordered meetinghouse fortified as a place of security.

1690 — Samuel Wheeler leased the Stratford ferry for twenty-one years.

1692 — Last trial for witchcraft in Connecticut (Mercy Disborough's) was held in Fairfield.

1693 — The wolf hunt.

1695 — Ecclesiastical Society of Stratford was organized.

1696 — "James Bennitt, a shipwright, built a vessel at Stratford."

1697 — Birth of Elnathan Beach, who first, in Connecticut, began a fund for relief of the poor.

1698 — Death of Moses Wheeler, aged 100 years, the first ferryman.

1702 — Death of the Reverend Israel Chauncey.

1704 — Birth of the Hon. Robert Walker, noted lawyer with few equals in his day.

1705 — Indian capitol, or "Council-fire place," at New Milford, sold.

1706 — The Rev. George Muirson, Episcopal missionary at Rye, held services at Stratford and baptized twenty-four persons, "which was the first step toward introducing the church worship into the colony" (for Episcopalians).

1707 — Christ Church, first Episcopal parish in Connecticut, was founded.

1708 — The Rev. Muirson died. Episcopal church left to occasional visit of missionaries.

1709 — The Rev. Timothy Cutler settled as minister of Congregational church.

1710 — Birth of General David Wooster, Revolutionary War officer.

1712 — The Rev. Francis Philips, an Episcopal missionary, labored here about five months.

1714 — Episcopal churchmen began the work of building a house of worship.

1715 — Voted that "our neighbors north of Tanner's Brook may set up a schoolhouse at the north end of the town at their own expense."

1716 — Oronoque allowed a separate school.

1717 — Separate school established at Old Mill green.

1719 — The Rev. Timothy Cutler became president of Yale College.

1722 — The Rev. George Pigot, missionary from New York, visited Episcopal parish. The building of a church edifice considered. The Rev. Hezekiah Gold called to be minister of Congregational church. A congregational parsonage begun.

1723 — Judson House built. Episcopal burying ground established. The Rev. Samuel Johnson reached Stratford after his ordination in England. The Rev. Timothy Cutler resigned presidency of Yale College, went to England and was ordained an Episcopal clergyman.

1724 — First service held in the First Episcopal Church building.

1727 — Episcopalians were excused from paying taxes for support of the Congregational church. Birth of William Samuel Johnson, delegate to the Constitutional Convention, president of Columbia College and United States Senator from Connecticut.

1730 — Robert Wheeler granted liberty to set up grist mill on east bank of Far Mill River.

1732 — Division of common lands ordered, which was not made until 1783.

1733 — The Rev. Samuel Johnson and others requested liberty of erecting and setting up a school house on the Common.

1735 — Supporters of the Episcopal church petition for town to grant a portion of common lands for their minister. It was granted.

1736 — Birth, in Stratford, of Andrew Adams whose name appears signed to the Articles of Confederation.

1737 — All taxed, but tax money of Episcopalians

turned back to their use.

1739 — Another request for part of common land for Episcopal church use, again granted.

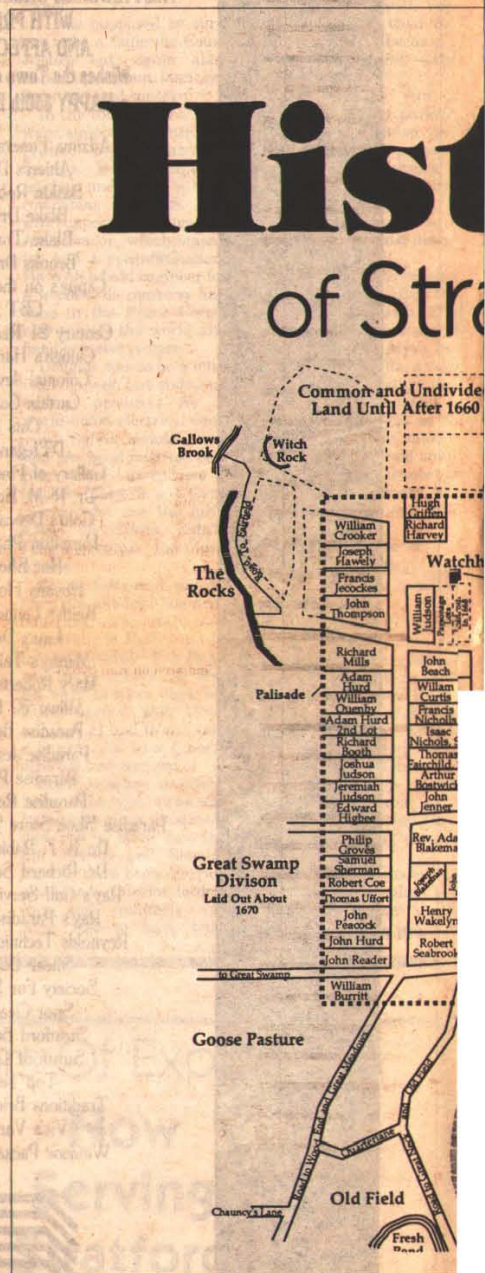
1740 — Visit of the Rev. George Whitefield, who stood upon the steps of the Congregational Church on Academy Hill and preached to a great multitude.

1743 — Third Congregational church building erected, by taxation. Second Episcopal church building erected on Main Street, by stock ownership. Upon its spire is placed the weather-cock which tops the spire of the present edifice.

1744 — New Episcopal building, unplastered and without pews, opened with a sermon by Dr. Johnson.

1745 — Public greens came into town's possession as gifts of private individuals.

1750 — Voted to build a town hall.



1751 — Agreement for a clock to be built for Episcopal tower by John Davis, "a stranger."

1752 — The Rev. Hezekiah Gold, Congregational minister, having married an Episcopalian, who insisted upon attending her own church services, thereby making him escort her to and from the door of her church, before and after conducting his own service. The Rev. Gold was pastor for twenty years.

1753 — Birth of Captain Nehemiah Gorham, a Revolutionary War officer.

1754 — Dr. Samuel Johnson accepted presidency of King's College. The Rev. Irahiah Wetmore is pastor of First Congregational Church.

1756 — Washington, as a British officer, first passed through Stratford. Birth of General Joseph Walker,

STRATFORD'S 350th Trolley Tour

Introduction

As you follow the tour you will be traveling through the Stratford of 350 years ago as it was planned and laid out by the first settlers. At some points you will see locations virtually unchanged from the earliest days.

Along the route various houses will illustrate changing times and fashions and others will show the desire of townspeople to preserve their historical past.

If you are a Stratfordite, we hope you will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of your town. If you are a visitor, welcome. The 350-year heritage is ours, but it is yours too, and we invite you to join us in our motto to "Continue the Spirit."

The Settlers

Stratford's first settlers arrived here in 1639, led by the Rev. Adam Blakeman. Coming from England, they nostalgically named their new home Stratford. Tradition says they landed at Mac's Harbor, but Town Historian Lewis Knapp's research leads him to believe they came overland. What is certain is that our ancestors came into the wilderness and carved out a place where they could worship and live in freedom and hope for the future. We are the beneficiaries of their courage and determination.

The location of the first settlement offered an abundant food supply and natural protection. On the exposed western side and to the north, the settlers built an 8-to-10-foot-high wooden palisade and a watch house a little distance off.

The settlers built homes, laid out one-to-two acre homelots, and established common fields for farming and grazing. Soon they began building boats and established a thriving port for import and export that served the town for more than three centuries.

The boundaries of the first settlement are close to those of the recently established National Register Historic District which this tour covers. Main and Elm Streets were the north and south thoroughfares and Broad Street, Stratford Avenue and South Avenue were the original cross-streets.

Trolley Tour

The trolley leaves from the American Festival Theatre parking area on Elm Street.

(FROM THE THEATER, TURN RIGHT, HEADING NORTH, ONTO ELM STREET.)

1) #1850, on your right as we turn out of the driveway, is the **Nicoll-Benjamin House**, now the American Festival Theatre administration building. It was built c. 1835 as a Greek Revival home, probably by Capt. Samuel Nicoll, who had made his fortune as captain of the privateer "Scourge" in the War of 1812. Below the ground floor is a four-foot-high sub-basement which may have been used by escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad or, with the Captain's reputation, to hold smuggled rum. A later resident, John Benjamin, was president of the New York Stock Exchange and the first president of the Housatonic Boat Club.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO STRATFORD AVENUE)

Stratford Avenue, one of the original streets, becomes a narrow lane as it leads to the Lower Dock, now called Bond's Dock. On the left are World War I era two-family homes that became popular when housing materials were expensive and money was tight.

2) #841 is the **Fairchild house**, built c. 1791. The simplistically styled early one-half Federal style home with center chimney and gable roof was popular in this area.

(PROCEED SLOWLY)

3) **Selby's Pond**, the tiny body of water you can see behind the houses on the right, was called the Great Salt Pond in Colonial times and because of its highly saline water, people used it to soak flax to make thread for linen cloth. Legend said the pond was bottomless.

4) #719 on the right was built c. 1760 and has changed very little over the years. Large panes of glass were very expensive in the 18th century and its windows probably were like the 12-over-12 sash you can see in the attic. **Nehemiah Allen**, who lived here, used hides from the slaughter house across the street to make shoes. Leather pants and saddles were also made from the abundance of hides and also exported from the Lower Dock to the West Indies and other far ports. In Colonial Stratford, work clothes were usually made of leather, rather than cloth.

5) #627 on the right is the **Capt. John Selby house**, for whom the pond is named. It dates to c. 1765. Sea captains who sailed from the Lower Dock built their homes near the water so they commanded a view of the port. It was believed that a sea captain lost a minute of his life for every minute he could not view the sea or a waterway. According to Orcutt's *History of Stratford*, Capt. Selby once returned from a voyage with six hogheads of rum in the cargo on which he neglected to pay duty. The customs agent seized his boat and auctioned it off and Selby was thrown in jail. The owners, who were the minister's sons, quietly bought back the boat and resumed the business and Selby later opened a saloon.

6) #640, at the end of the row of houses once occupied by dock workers, is the **Lewis Burrill house**. This c. 1796 Federal home retains a good deal of its original character. The Burrills were noted cabinet and coffin makers and rumor has it that extra coffins were kept in the basement for those who did not survive their sea voyages.



7) On the left is **Brown's Boatyard**. Small shops such as these have serviced the port and its sailors for more than three centuries.

8) Next on the left is **Bond's Dock**, known over the years as Prince's, Thompson's and the Lower Dock. It was the town's main dock from the mid-17th century. Cargo vessels and sailing packets landed here. Sugar, molasses, rum and salt were imported from the West Indies and horses and barrel staves were exported to the Caribbean where both commodities were scarce. Corn and leather goods were also exported. In 1880 **Capt. John Bond** converted the old shipping warehouse into a training center for boxers. Dempsey, Firpo and Jack Johnson are said to have trained here and John L. Sullivan was a frequent visitor. (BEAR RIGHT ON SHORE ROAD)

9) #19 On the right is the remaining part of an old warehouse constructed in 1830. The upper story served as a residence while the tall basement was a storehouse for export goods.

10) #31 on the left is the only remaining oyster house where Stratford oysters were packed for shipment by boat or train. It was later used to house actors performing at the Theater. **Katharine Hepburn** lived in it for two summers and enjoyed the fact that water came up through the floorboards at high tide.

11) #50 on the right was once the home of **Albert Laing**, who inspired the Stratford School of decoy carvers. According to *The Art of the Decoy*, Laing's birds "were fashioned so expertly they are as tight and good now as on the day they were finished." In 1886, in failing health and no longer able to carve with the perfection he demanded of himself, Laing made the final entry in his diary "Today the martins left..." and shot himself. His estate listed 111 stool ducks, valued at \$45. Today, his decoys bring \$3,000 to \$25,000 each.

12) Once oystering was an important industry in Stratford. In the 17th century foot-long oysters could be picked up from the river bottom and, even before the American Revolution, laws were passed to limit oyster harvesting to winter and fall. In the 19th century as many as 250 oyster sloops worked the offshore beds in the Sound.

13) On the right is the **American Festival Theatre**, originally and still referred to as the Shakespeare Theatre. It is designed in the octagonal shape of the Globe Theatre in England and sheathed in teak supposedly so hard each nail hole had to be drilled. The Republic of France donated the teak, which was originally intended for a 1939 World's Fair pavilion that was never built. In 1954 **Katharine Cornell** broke the ground with a gold shovel and the theater opened with **Julius Caesar** the following year. Actor/director John Houseman and actor **Morris Carnovsky** were instrumental in bringing the AST to the fore and such actors as **Christopher Plummer**, **Raymond Massey**, **Roddy McDowell** and **Jack Palance** have performed there. Dark for several years, the complex has been acquired by the state, which will run it through the University of Connecticut's Stratford Institute and a board of directors. A limited summer season was produced in 1989 to coincide with Strat-

ford's 350th Celebration.

(PAUSE AT CORNER BEFORE TURNING RIGHT)

14) Stratford is one of the communities in the area fighting to preserve its coastline. This area appears much as it did at the turn of the century. The salt marsh on your left and in front of you was an open harbor when the first settlers arrived in Stratford.

(PAUSE NEAR MARKER)

15) On your left is **Mac's Harbor**, named for Little Mack (or Mac), who was a shellerman and kept his oyster piles at the south end of the Theatre grounds, known as Shellkeep Point. The plaque, commemorating this historic site, was erected in 1970 by the Connecticut Historical Commission and the town. Across the inlet, at the base of the trees, you can see a crumbled pile of stones marking the site of the **first grist mill**. By 1660 Stratford had three mills, two powered by the tide and the other by a fast flowing inland stream.

Tidal mills were superseded by mills powered by streams, and it was largely due to its superior water power and more protected harbor that Bridgeport became a separate entity from Stratford in 1821. At one time Stratford encompassed all or large parts of what is now Bridgeport, Trumbull, Easton, Monroe, Huntington and Shelton. For years Stratford even had an ongoing dispute with Newtown over its northern border.

16) The early settlers had a surprising variety of food. In addition to their domestic sheep, cows, swine and chickens, they ate water fowl, wild turkey, partridge, quail, pigeon and venison. They grew Indian corn and picked strawberries, blackberries and wild grapes. From the streams and sea came fish, oysters, eels and clams.

17) #320, the large house on the right was probably built c. 1732 by **Joseph Gorham**. This homelot has been occupied since the founding of the town and is listed in Vol. 1, page 1 of the town's land records. Originally a saltbox, it has been radically modified. One owner, **the Rev. Israel Chauncey**, was a founder of Yale University. Later **Capt. Nathan Gorham** wintered his 100-ton schooner across the street where now there is only marsh. The house has sometimes served as an inn even in modern times, but is now privately owned.

(PAUSE AT CORNER OF ELM STREET)

18) This intersection was known as **Sandy Hollow** and the SE corner is the site of the first meeting house which was surrounded by a small burial ground. The green in the middle of South Avenue is the approximate location of the **Old Sandy Hollow School House** that served until the districts were consolidated. The marker is the **Beardsley family monument**, which was dedicated during the 300th celebration in 1939 when the descendants of the original settler William Beardsley had a family reunion.

(PROCEED DOWN SOUTH AVENUE)

19) #973, the blue-grey house with black shutters on your left, is the upper half of the old **Sandy Hollow (or Old South) School**. Shortly after the Consolidated School was built, the old school building was pulled by team and greased skids to this site where it was jacked up 10-12 feet and a framed first story built below. A window pane on the second floor still bears the initials "CG" scratched there by a schoolboy in 1835.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO MAIN STREET)

Main Street, one of the original thoroughfares, dates back to the mid-1600s. The palisade paralleled the street behind the homelots on the west side to protect the settlers from Indians and wolves. At the turn of the century quite a hullabaloo was raised by those who felt the aesthetics of the street would be ruined when telephone and electric poles were added. Nearly half the houses on this street date to before the Civil War and a variety of architectural styles is represented.

20) #1630 on the right is a large, high style Italianate home c. 1870. The flat roof, rounded window hoods, brackets and large windows are all characteristic of Italianate houses.

21) #1656, also on your right, is a Greek Revival, dating to c. 1850. Note the use of classical columns and pediments like those found on a Greek temple.

22) #1770, the house on the right was built in 1920 with hipped roof and stucco exterior, styled after English Tudor homes.

CROSS STREET — WELLS PLACE

(CONTINUE TRAVELING TO STRATFORD AVENUE)

23) Around the turn of the century Stratford experienced a population growth and several streets were built, filling in the Academy Hill area, to provide new home sites. **Wells Place** is such a street, comprised of modest homes representative of the building styles popular from 1900 through 1935. Stained glass was often used — a luxury and status symbol — and some is still evident today.

24) None of the historic character remains at this once important intersection called **Hard's Corner**. **John Hard's store**, built in 1792, stood on the southeast corner with the **Mason's First Hall** on the second floor. Across from it was **Elijah Marshall's Tavern** where Lafayette had breakfast in 1824, and nearby was **Jeremiah Quire's blacksmith shop**. This area is slated for streetscaping and commercial rehabilitation as part of the 350th celebration.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO STRATFORD AVENUE)

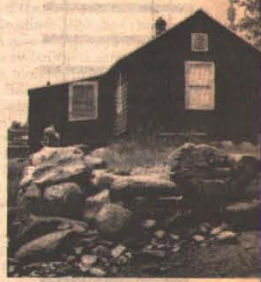
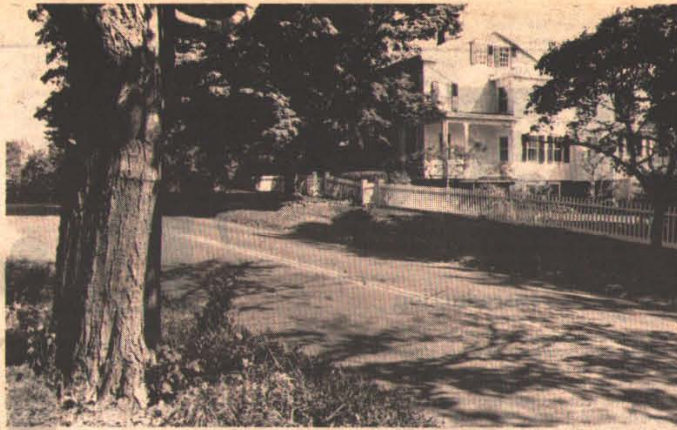
In a moment we will be turning onto **Elm Street**, originally known as **Front Street**. Elm and Main were the two roads of the original settlement. The giant native trees for which it was re-named lined each side of the street but have since all fallen to Dutch Elm disease except for one majestic

tree at the SE corner (Stratford and Elm). As part of Stratford's 350th anniversary celebration new disease resistant trees are being planted to replace the elms.

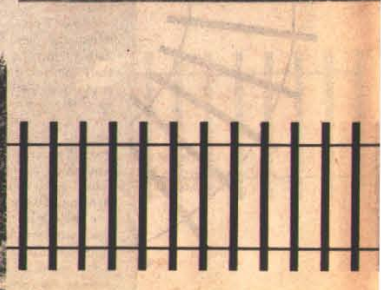
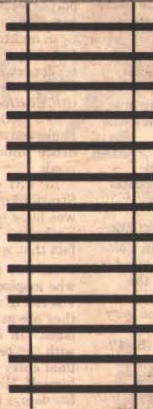
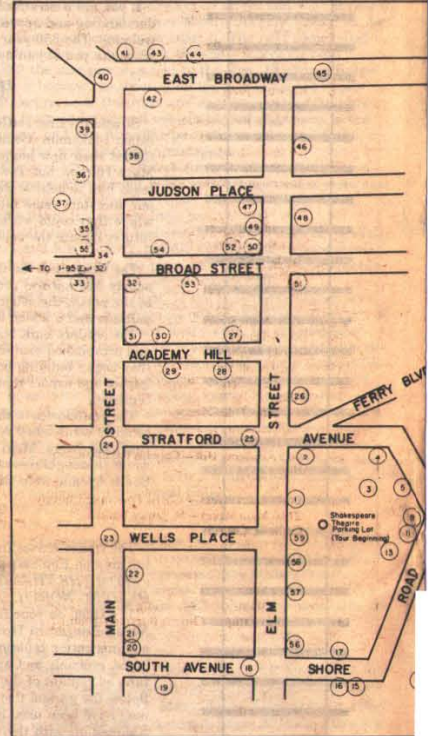
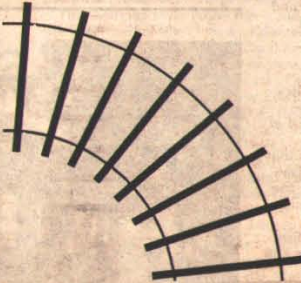
As we continue on Stratford Avenue and cross Main Street, you will notice on your left the esplanade improvement project being completed as part of the town's 350th Celebration.

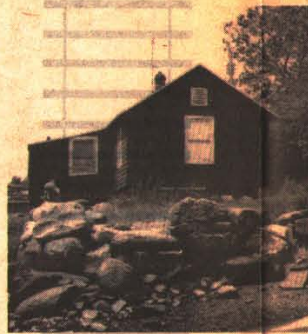
We are now entering the **Academy Hill** area. The homes here are grandiose and stately and of varying ages dating back to the Revolution. The waterfront, which we just left, first served as the town's center but eventually became associated with dock activities, raucous sailors and even boxers and it became more fashionable to live closer to the center of town.

One's home denoted their position in society and houses were constantly being remodeled in the popular style of the day. Georgians and Federals were re-done with Italianate and Greek Revival features to keep up with the times. Only at the turn of the century did it become stylish to own a historic house. This trend, thankfully, accounts for the moving and preservation of many of Stratford's historic houses. Today this attitude is even more prevalent as seen in the establishment of Historic Districts such as this.

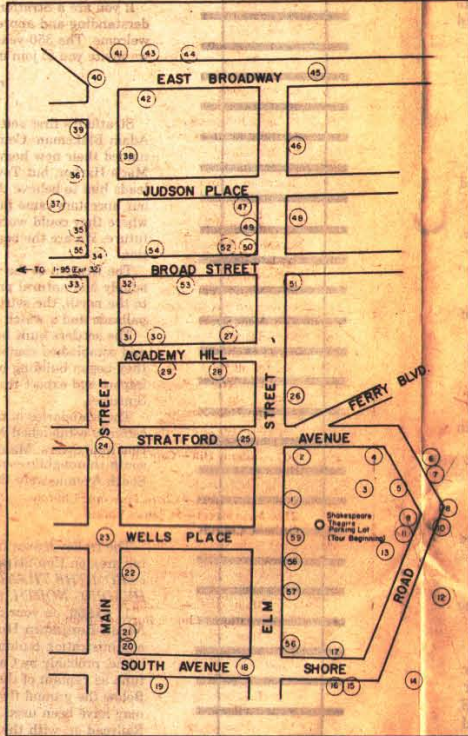


Photos by Michael Kolster & Dorothy Euerle



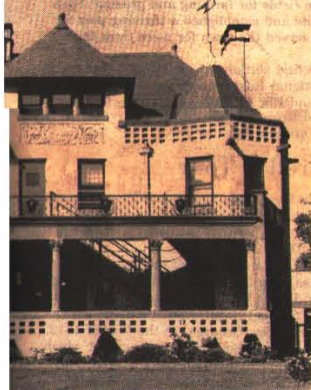
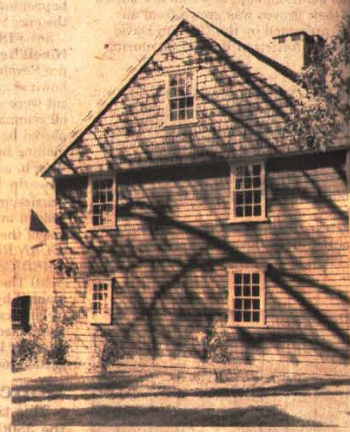


Photos by Michael Kolster & Dorothy Euerle



Tour Key:

- 1 1850 Elm Street — Nicoll-Benjamin House
- 2 841 Stratford Avenue — Fairchild House
- 3 Selby's Pond
- 4 719 Stratford Avenue — Nehemia Allen House
- 5 627 Stratford Avenue — Captain John Selby House
- 6 640 Stratford Avenue — Lewis Burritt House
- 7 Brown's Boatyard
- 8 Bond's Dock
- 9 19 Shore Road — Warehouse
- 10 31 Shore Road — Oyster House
- 11 50 Shore Road — Albert Laing House
- 12 Housatonic River Oystering
- 13 American Festival — (Shakespeare) Theatre
- 14 Salt Marsh
- 15 Mac's Harbor
- 16 Diet of early settlers
- 17 320 Shore Road — Joseph Gorham House
- 18 Sandy Hollow
- 19 973 South Avenue — Sandy Hollow School
- 20 1640 Main Street — Italianate Home
- 21 1656 Main Street — Greek Revival Home
- 22 1770 Main Street — Tudoresque Home
- 23 Wells Place
- 24 Hard's Corner
- 25 Great Wolf Hunt
- 26 1962 Elm Street — Captain Thomas Austin Home
- 27 Academy Hill Common
- 28 923 Academy Hill — Captain D. Polaski Benjamin House
- 29 967 Academy Hill — Captain David Judson House
- 30 Stratford "Tunnels"
- 31 2000 Main Street — Christ Episcopal Church
- 32 2110 Main Street — St. James Roman Catholic Church
- 33 2103 Main Street — Samuel William Johnson House
- 34 World War I Monument
- 35 2203 Main Street — Stratford Library
- 36 2283 Main Street — Sterling House
- 37 Congregational Church Burying Ground
- 38 2288 Main Street — David Brooks House
- 39 2301 Main Street — First Congregational Church
- 40 Town Flaggpole
- 41 1000 East Broadway — Old Center School
- 42 953 East Broadway — Italianate Home
- 43 952 East Broadway — Federal 1/2 House
- 44 922 East Broadway — Shingle Style Home
- 45 "Olde King's Highway"
- 46 2272 Elm Street — Dr. Agur Tomlinson House
- 47 2211 Elm Street — Queen Anne Style House
- 48 2190 Elm Street — Thomas Wells House
- 49 2175 Elm Street — General Joseph Walker House
- 50 2149 Elm Street — Lt. Governor David Plant House
- 51 2134 Elm Street — Curtis House
- 52 908, 890 Broad Street — Italianate Homes
- 53 Episcopal Burying Ground
- 54 965 Broad Street — Congregational Church Parsonage
- 55 2155 Main Street — Italianate House
- 56 1670 Elm Street — Alfred Ely Beach House
- 57 Site of Phelps Mansion
- 58 1812 Elm Street — Nicoll/Beach Home
- 59 Shakespeare Gardens



IN HONOR OF
THE MEN AND WOMEN
WHO PLANTED IN THE WILDERNESS
THE EARLY HOMES OF STRATFORD.
WHO FOUGHT BRAVELY AND SUFFERED PATIENTLY
IN THE WAR OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,
AND WHO LEFT TO THEIR DESCENDANTS
A PROUD MEMORY OF COURAGE,
ENDURANCE AND FAITH IN GOD.

Tour Key:

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(PAUSE)

26) #1962, the Italianate style house on the right, is the first example of the grander architecture of the Academy Hill area. Built in 1852 by **Capt. Thomas Austin**, it stands almost exactly as when constructed. Austin commanded some of the last and largest of the pre-clipper trans-Atlantic windjammers and continued to sail long after most Stratford shipmasters had retired.

(START UP AND TURN LEFT ONTO ACADEMY HILL)

27) On the right is **Academy Hill Common**. The road we are on is one of four that boxes in this six-acre parcel of land. Called **Watch Hill** until 1680, it was changed to **Meeting House Hill** when the second meeting house was built here. In 1743 a third meeting house replaced the old one and was located east of the Civil War monument. It was struck by lightning and burned in 1785 and in 1805 the Stratford Academy was built on the site and stood there until 1872. After the school's construction the hill was re-named **Academy Hill** and continues to bear that name.

28) #923 on your left was built in 1835 by Asa Curtis for his daughter, who became the wife of **Capt. D. Polaski Benjamin**. Benjamin began his naval career at 16 as a deck hand during the War of 1812. Captured on Christmas day and imprisoned for two years, he escaped the infamous Dartmoor prison massacre and by 1827 was captain of his own ship, crossing the Atlantic every 106 days. Arriving home from a voyage in 1836, Capt. Benjamin was told by his pastor that his wife Susan had died "loving the Lord." "Like hell she did," Benjamin exclaimed, "She never loved anyone but me!"

In later years Anna Oliver, the first woman preacher in the American Methodist Church, lived here and at one time it was a school for girls.

29) #967 is the **Capt. David Judson House**, home of The Stratford Historical Society. The curved pediments above the doorway are an outstanding example of such design throughout the Connecticut Valley. The house design is a mid-18th century transition between saltbox and Georgian. In 1988 Judson House was re-painted in its original colors in preparation for the 350th celebration.

The **Catherine Bunnell Mitchell Museum**, located to the rear, houses exhibits depicting Stratford's history. Tours are conducted by guides in Colonial costume on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from mid-April through October.

(PROCEED SLOWLY TO CORNER)

30) Many Stratfordites believe there were tunnels in this area. However, Town Historian Lewis Knapp says that "The tunnels" played in were the basements of the Episcopal and Congregational Churches which were built (1858 and 1859) on stone foundations with interior piers and arches to support the columns above. The low height, dirt-floored crawlspaces that formed *ad hoc* crypts, might have looked to some people to be "tunnels." Twentieth century additions of basements were made to both churches.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO MAIN STREET)

31) #2000 on the right is the **Christ Episcopal Church**. The original parish was established in 1707, making it the oldest parish in the oldest Episcopal diocese in the United States. During the French and Indian Wars a Highland Battalion encamped on Academy Hill took pot-shots at the six-foot tall golden rooster weathervane — the marks of the pellet holes have been filled in. This Gothic-style church was designed in 1857 by Henry Dudley and in 1988 restored to its original colors.

(STOP AT THE CORNER OF MAIN AND BROAD)

32) #2110 on your right is **St. James Roman Catholic Church**, the first Catholic church in Stratford, established in 1886. The building was dedicated in 1914 and the school added in 1949.

33) #2103, across the street with the blue shutters, is the home of **Samuel Johnson**, son of one of the signers of the U.S. Constitution, **William Samuel Johnson**, whose home stood on the south side of West Broad Green.

William Samuel Johnson was a member of Congress under the Articles of Confederation, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and the first Senator from Connecticut. He is credited as one of the authors of the "Connecticut Compromise" which provided for one Representative for each 30,000 people and two Senators per state. As chairman of the Committee on Style, he can be said to have been the "editor" of the Constitution and an original copy of the document bears his marginal notes. Johnson was the first president of Columbia College succeeding his father Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was founder and first president of the then King's College.

34) The statue you see at the end of the green across the street is a **World War I monument**. Seated on a marble pedestal, the bronzelady holds a dove and olive branches. In her lap are 13 gold stars, one for each stratford man who lost his life.

Running on either side of the green is **West Broad Street**, once a part of the Boston Post Road. The strip of land in the center of the street is the **South Parade Grounds** where the train band or militia paraded and trained.

35) #2203 on the left is the **Stratford Library**. The town's first library was in David Brooks' store and post office across the street and it was long years before Stratford had a true library. The Stratford Library Association, formed in 1885, finally found a permanent home in this Romanesque building, a gift to the town from Birdseye Blakeman. Designed by William Miller, it is made of New York State granite. In the 1970s the building was renovated and expanded to include the Sterling Memorial Building/American Legion Hall, which was built with granite quarried from Roosevelt Forest in the north end of town. The tile roof is unique. The Shakespeare and rose window from the original building are incorporated in the new.

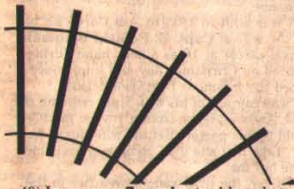
36) #2283 On the left is **Sterling House**, Stratford's community center. The 30-room mansion originally sat on eight acres laid out by the firm of Frederick Law Olmstead, landscape architect of New York City's Central Park. The house was designed for John W. Sterling by Bruce Price, who designed Osborne and Welch Halls at Yale University. Sterling was a Yale graduate and its largest benefactor. His maiden sister Cordelia lived in the house until 1931 and left it to the town to be used as a community center. Note the **eyebrow window** in the roof and the **gargoyle** over the side entrance.

37) Behind the **Stratford Library** and **Sterling House** is the **Old Congregational Church Burying Ground**, set aside by the town fathers in 1678. The memorial gates were erected by the **Mary Silliman Chapter, National Society Daughters of the**

American Revolution, in 1906 and are dedicated to "the men and women who planted in the wilderness the early homes of Stratford, who fought bravely and suffered patiently in the war of the American Revolution and who left to their descendants a proud memory of courage, endurance and faith in God."

38) #2288, the yellow building on the right, is the David Brooks house. This saltbox, built in c. 1715, served as a post office, general store and as the stagecoach stop from New York to Boston.

39) #2301 On the left is the **First Congregational Church**, built between 1857-9. It was designed in the Swiss Gothic style by famed ecclesiastical architect Leopold Eidlitz. When the church was repaired c. 1960, the architecture of the steeple was changed to neo-Colonial to the dismay of many, including a Yale professor of architectural history, who had previously brought students here to study Eidlitz's Carpenter Gothic edifice.



40) Long ago a **flagpole** stood here but over the years it was replaced by other things. In recent years locals continued to direct people to Stratford Center, saying, "Go to the flagpole" when, in fact, the circle in the rotary had a lamp post. After a hurricane toppled it in 1986, the **Lovell family** put up the **flagpole** you see today and at last made the directions fact again.

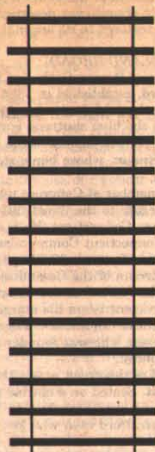
(TURN RIGHT ONTO EAST BROADWAY AND PAUSE ACROSS FROM CENTER SCHOOL.)

This road, previously called **Ferry Road** and **Schoolhouse Road**, marks the northern boundary of the National Register Historic District. It leads to the fifth **Washington Bridge**. Before there was a bridge people crossed the Housatonic River via ferry. In 1670 the fare was a half-penny for people and two pence for "horse or beast." Moses Wheeler, who died at age 100 and was quite likely New England's first centenarian, was the ferryman for many years. When he retired his son Samuel followed the tradition.

41) #1000 across the street is the **Board of Education** which is housed in the **Old Center School**. In 1885 the three-story Stratford Graded, or Consolidated School was built here to replace the one-room schools spread throughout town. In 1921 the building burned and classes were held in different locations throughout town until the new Stratford High School was completed in 1925. The Old Center School was re-built and used as a grammar school until 1970.

42) #953 On the right is a high style Italianate home c. 1855. Note the unusual Ionic portico on the front.

43) #952 On your left is what is known as a Federal one-half house. Homes such as this one built c. 1820 were popular during that period as they were approximately half the size of a standard Federal style house yet looked as elegant.



44) #922 On the left is a shingle style home built c. 1895. This style became very popular in the midwest and west around the turn of the century.

45) The stone marker at the intersection explains that you are now on the "Olde King's Highway," better known as the **Boston Post Road**. Established in 1672-3, it is the **oldest mail route** in the United States and followed Indian trails from New York to Boston. Over this very ground Stratford's post rider Ebenezer Hurd carried the news of Lexington and Concord.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO ELM STREET)

46) #2272 On your left is the **Dr. Agur Tomlinson house**. The c. 1772 Georgian-style home was one of the first in Stratford to be restored and was moved from Main Street by Judge Russell to make way for the library. Russell's daughter Frances (Fanny) ran the Library for more than 60 years and her office in the new building was on the very spot where her bedroom had been.

47) #2211 On the righthand corner, as we cross the intersection, is a very ornate Queen Anne style. Notice the multicolor treatment highlighting the different elements of the house. Built in 1892, it is one of the highest style houses of this type in Stratford.

48) #2190 On the left is the **Thomas Wells house**, another example of a c. 1750 saltbox. The **Shelton** family, who lived here from 1842-1917, is said to have unearthed a chest of Spanish coins in the cellar, giving rise to the rumor that it was part of Captain Kid's treasure. For years people have searched for Kid's treasure on Lordship beaches and off-shore islands.

49) #2175 On the right is the **General Joseph Walker** house, believed to be one of the oldest in the area with a suspected construction date of c. 1690. Its style is derived from Post-medieval English buildings. In 1934 it was moved piece-by-piece from Main Street north of the Railroad Station to its present site. The Raymond Baldwin family lived here at one time. He had the distinction of serving as Governor of Connecticut, Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court and United States Congressman.

(STOP AT INTERSECTION OF BROAD)

50) #2149 On the righthand corner is the **Lt. Gov. David Plant** house, which he designed and built in 1825 to replace the home his father set up after serving in the French and Indian War. David probably got his ideas for such features as the arched doorways and curved balustrade (which he may have turned himself in his father's wheelwright shop) from his visits to Yale classmate John Calhoun in the South.

In 1889 it was known as "where the children of the County Home live." The kitchen in the north of the house is thought to have been the original wheelwright shop.

Plant served as a State Senator, Lt. Governor on the Whig ticket and went on to become a Congressman. He was Stratford's first Judge of Probate.

51) #2134 Kitty-corner across the intersection is the **Curtis house**. It stands on the corner of Elm and Broad Streets facing Academy Hill, but in 1750 it stood on the corner of Front Street and New Lane and faced Meeting House Hill. Can you figure out why? (Those were the previous names.)

The Georgian style house has a sad history. It was built in the latter half of the 1700s by **Edward Curtis** for his bride-to-be, but Curtis died before he could marry and the house was completed and lived in by his nephew, **Henry**. The house's bizarre slant is the result of years of settling, but Stratford legend says it began to tilt the day Edward died.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO BROAD STREET)

52) #908 and #890 On the right are two more stylized Italianate homes built around c. 1850 by two brothers, each trying to surpass the other in grandeur.

53) On the left is the **Episcopal burying grounds**. It has existed since 1723 when the first Episcopal church was built. In 1931 Columbia University dedicated the gates to Dr. Samuel Johnson and William Samuel Johnson, both of whom are buried here. The large oak next to their graves was grown from an acorn from the Charter Oak, presented by the Captain David Hawley Chapter, Children of the American Revolution, during the Tercentenary celebration.

(PAUSE IN FRONT OF:)

54) #965 on the right was the **Congregational Church Parsonage**. Leopold Eidlitz, who designed the church, was noted for creating such buildings as the American Exchange National and Dry Dock Savings banks and collaborating on the New York State capitol. He did not build residences. But somehow William Boothe prevailed upon him to design the parsonage also and it was built in the Swiss style of the church. Today it is privately owned.

55) #2155 Main Street, across the intersection, is an example of a high style Italianate house c. 1850. Over the years it became impossible for such a large house to function as a private

home and for some time it was the Red Cross building. It had fallen into disrepair until purchased and restored by the **Pistey family**.

(TURN LEFT ONTO MAIN STREET AND PROCEED TO SOUTH AVENUE, TURN LEFT ON SOUTH AND PROCEED TO AND TURN LEFT ONTO ELM STREET)

56) #1670 on your right is a fine example of the transitional architecture between Greek revival and Italianate. **Alfred Ely Beach**, who lived here, invented the first practical typewriter, the first with raised type for the blind; published the *New York Sun*; and began the *Scientific American*. In 1868 he secretly dug a block-and-a-half long tunnel and built a magnificent waiting room under a Manhattan street to demonstrate his pneumatically-powered subway car. Sadly, his plan was sabotaged by Tammany Boss Tweed and today only a plaque marks the spot of Beach's walled-up dream.

Although he never made money from his own inventions, Beach became rich acting as consultant to such men as Samuel Morse and Elias Howe and, as Thomas Edison's patent attorney, he was among the first to see the incandescent lamp, phonograph and moving picture machine.

57) Where you see the recent housing development, once stood Stratford's most notorious building, **The Phelps Mansion** was built in 1826 by the wife of **Capt. George R. Dowell** while her seafaring husband was on his final voyage. The 70-by-12 foot main hallway, built to the exact dimensions of a clipper ship's deck, and the twin stairways on either end were meant to allow the Captain to feel he was aboard his ship. Sadly, he died of the plague and never got to enjoy it. The next owner died within two years and in 1840 it became a school for boys.

In 1849 the mansion was sold to the **Rev. Eliakin Phelps** and soon it became the scene of all kinds of supposed supernatural occurrences. Believers and sceptics crowded into town on every train and a special vehicle carried sightseers to the house night and day. Mrs. Phelps and her children left the house and the weird happenings stopped.

For the next 100 years all was quiet. In the 1940s the mansion became a convalescent home and strange events were said to occur again, including the report that the "spirits" twice saved the life of the owners' little son.

Eventually the pillared mansion fell prey to neglect, vandals, vagrants and fire. In 1972, amidst new reports of mysterious happenings and despite the pleas and protests of townspeople, the once stately home fell to the wrecker's ball.

58) #1812 Also on the right, is the Colonial/Georgian style **Nicoll/Beach** home, heralded as one of the finest examples of pre-Revolutionary architecture in the area. Its original hand-hewn shingles date from a time when most houses in Connecticut were clapboard sided. In the War of 1812 **Capt. Samuel Nicoll** commanded the 15-gun schooner privateer "Scourge" and played havoc with British shipping, capturing prizes and making his fortune. This house was also the home of **Stanley Beach**, an early aviation enthusiast who built his own plane in a nearby barn and saw the Wright brothers fly, knew **Glenn Curtiss** and **Bleriot**, and worked with **Gustave Whitehead**. Imbedded in the sidewalk at the curb is a **millstone** thought to be one of the originals from Colonial times.

(TURN RIGHT INTO AMERICAN FESTIVAL THEATRE GROUNDS)

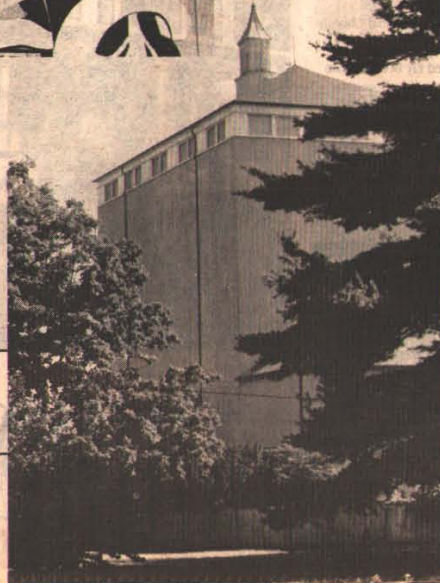
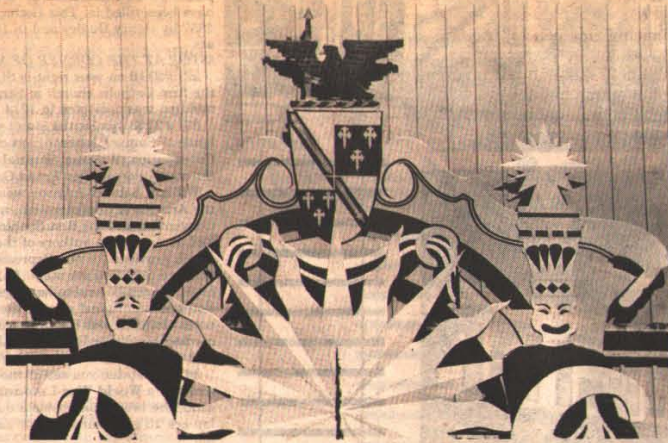
59) **The Shakespeare Garden** was conceived and originally planted by actor **Will Geer** (Grandpa Walton), who had a degree in landscaping. The garden contains many of the plants mentioned in Shakespeare's works. The Shakespeare Guild, a group of longtime AST and now AFT volunteers, maintains the garden today.

Conclusion

This trolley/driving tour was written by **Dee Watt** for the 350th Celebration, based on the Architectural Tour created by **Yankee Intern Mary Allyn Schwartz** in 1988. Included is information garnered from **William Howard Wilcoxson's History of Stratford, Connecticut**; the valuable input and writings of **Town Historian Lewis Knapp**; **A Walk Through Time: Walking Tours of Stratford, Connecticut**, by **Barbara M. Sirois**; and numerous other sources.

The other members of the 350th Trolley Tour Committee — **Town Planner David Killeen**, **350th Executive Director Gioia Marinaccio**, **Susan Verrelli** and **Patricia Naylor** — offered continued encouragement, patience, guidance and time.

We hope the tour will when your desire to learn more about Stratford history and that you will consult the **Historical Society**, the **Stratford Library Association** and local schools for more information.



a Revolutionary War officer.

1757 — "Colonel Frazier's Highland Battalion was encamped on the common and amused themselves by shooting at the weather-cock on the Episcopal church spire, piercing it many times." Birth of Colonel Aaron Benjamin, who was in the attack on Stony Point.

1758 — First town meeting held in first town hall. Organ placed in Episcopal Church. Stratford and sister towns recompensed by General Assembly for quartering Colonel Frazier's Highland Battalion.

1760 — Town voted to build a "pest house."

1762 — Severe drought, but spring which answered the prayers of the Rev. Nathan Birdseye, in Oranogue never has dried. Episcopal bell cast in Fairfield.

baronet, at Benjamin Tavern.

1771 — Marriage, in Christ Church, of Glorianna Folsom and John Stirling.

1772 — Death of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

1773 — Glorianna Folsom Stirling sailed from New York to rejoin her husband at Gloriat, the family seat at Stirlingshire, in Scotland.

1774 — Town meeting authorized collections to be taken to assist the oppressed people of Boston.

1775 — Washington met Lafayette at the Benjamin Tavern.

1776 — Captain David Hawley sailed from Stratford, was captured by the British but later escaped to New York in a small boat.

1777 — Town meeting, held at North Parish, voted unanimously the sum of ten pounds to each who enlisted in Continental service for three years or during the war. Voted a tax of eight pence on the pound on list of 1776 to pay same. Later, committee appointed to receive donations of provisions for support of soldier's families. Additional tax of six pence on pound. During spring and winter about six hundred persons had smallpox.

1778 — Articles of Confederation carefully considered and approved.

1779 — Tyrone's raids on shore towns, Stratford people, terrified, circulated petition requesting William Samuel Johnson and other prominent people to use their influence with British admiral and General to save Stratford. Johnson arrested, by orders of General Oliver Wolcott and ordered sent to Farmington, under guard, to prevent him holding correspondence with enemy. Johnson given parole, journeyed to place the case before Governor Trumbull and soon was exonerated by Council of Safety. Town makes effort to clear itself of charge of carrying on a traitorous correspondence with the enemy.

1780 — Town voted to provide one hundred of each of the following: shirts, mittens, stockings and shoes for soldiers from Stratford who were in active service. Birth of Gideon Tomlinson, Governor of Connecticut from 1827 to 1831 and U.S. Senator. Division of town into two townships considered.

1781 — Protest to General Assembly against division of town. Matter dropped.

1782 — Town authorized to "borrow money on the credit of the Town," for the first time, to pay bounties to fill the quota for the army. Berkshire mill established.

1783 — May 26th set apart as a day of "Public Rejoicing" for peace. Prayers, an address, singing, refreshments and toasts, and discharging of cannon made up the celebration. Birth of Hon. David Plant, four years Lieut. Governor of Connecticut and member of Congress.

1784 — Ordination of Stephen William Stebbins of Congregational Church, who "stopped the vandalism which cut away so much from Academy Hill and spoiled its symmetry."

1785 — Third Congregational Church struck by lightning and destroyed by fire.

1786 — Fourth Congregational Church built on location of present edifice and dedicated. Benjamin's Bridge built and Stratford Road (Avenue) opened.

1787 — Federal convention, William Samuel Johnson a delegate. Town meeting excitement over Connecticut's adopting the Constitution.

1789 — Washington breakfasted at Stratford on presidential tour of New England. Town of Huntington set off from Stratford.

1790 — Post office established with Robert Walker as first postmaster. Methodist Church organized in Stratford by Jesse Lee.

1791 — Methodist Bishop Asbury preached in the town house.

1792 — General Joseph Walker granted the privilege to build a grist mill at Benjamin's Bridge. This became the old "Yellow Mill."

1795 — Petition, for a bridge at the Ferry, before the General Assembly.

1796 — Birth of Capt. D. Pulaski Benjamin, last survivor of Dartmoor prisoners.

1797 — Town of Trumbull set off from Stratford.

1798 — Birthdate of Jesse Olney, A.M., author of geography and history text books, whose home was what is now the St. James rectory.

1799 — Epidemic of dysentery and typhus fever believed to be due to dyke built across Little Neck Creek.

1800 — William Samuel Johnson resigned presidency of Columbia, held since 1787.

1801 — "Turnpike era" under way.

1802 — Permission granted to build a toll bridge at the Ferry. Golden Hill Indian find established and still endures.

1803 — Name "Washington Bridge" first used.

1804 — Stratford Academy established.

1805 — Town voted to remove dyke at Little Neck. Academy completed.

1806 — Proprietors of Stratford Academy made a corporate body. First bridge, over Housatonic, washed away by ice-flood.

1807 — Lottery, granted by Legislature, to raise funds for another bridge.

1808 — Second bridge begun.

1810 — First Methodist Church building erected.

1812 — War with Great Britain — The "Scourge," Captain Samuel Nicoll, captured many prizes. Historic crystal chandelier, once owned by Christ Church, obtained from this source.

1813 — Second bridge at Ferry completed.

1814 — The Rev. Matthew R. Dutton, pastor at First Congregational Church. Stratford militia twice summoned to help defend Bridgeport when British vessels anchored off the harbor. No attacks made.

1815 — Captain Samuel Nicoll built dyke at Lordship farm.

1817 — Death of the Rev. Nathan Birdseye, aged 103 years.

1818 — Dwelling and barns at Lordship farm built. Red cedar pump taken from a Spanish vessel being repaired at New York, brought and installed at the farm by Capt. Nicoll for watering cattle. Forty-three years later it was taken up and, afterwards used by Spiritualists to pump water from the hole at the gold diggings about a mile east of the farm, near the shore. Wood later made into canes.

1821 — Borough of Bridgeport set off from Stratford.

1822 — Lighthouse keeper lost a cow by mosquitoes.

1823 — Monroe set off from Huntington.

1824 — Marquis de Lafayette passed through Stratford and stopped at Marshall's Tavern. Spent one half hour greeting the citizens.

1825 — The Rev. Joshua Leavitt, D.D. pastor at First Congregational Church.

1826 — Congregational Church Sunday School organized by Dr. Leavitt.

1830 — The Rev. Thomas Robbins pastor at First Congregational Church.

1831 — The Rev. James Harvey Linsley ordained to ministry of Baptist Church. He had already opened a mission at the lower wharf wholly at his own expense.

1832 — The Rev. Frederick W. Chapman pastor at First Congregational Church.

1834 — Methodist Church ceased to be on a circuit and became a station with a resident minister.

1836 — Bridgeport made a city. Housatonic railroad built.

1837 — Universalist Church building dedicated.

1839 — Second Methodist Church erected. The Rev. William Bouton Weed pastor at First Congregational Church.

1840 — Probate records of Stratford, formerly kept in Fairfield or Bridgeport, henceforth kept in Stratford.

1842 — "General Lafayette," first steamboat up the Housatonic to Derby.

1843 — Death of Mr. Linsley.

1844 — Putney Chapel built. New York and New Haven Railroad chartered.

1845 — Congregational lecture room built. Naugatuck railroad chartered.

1846 — About time of movement to settle middle west. Stratford people went.

1847 — Frederick A. Segewick became head of Stratford Academy.

1848 — Drawbridge widened. First snowplow in town, built by Mr. Sedgewick.

1849 — First railroad trains passed Stratford.

1850 — Stratford's "Spirit Knockings."

1851 — Death of Hon. David Plant, Lt. Gov. 1823-1827. Tide Mill at Eagle's Nest, built by the Johnsons, burned.

1857 — The Rev. Joseph R. Page pastor at First Congregational Church.

1858 — The Rev. Benjamin L. Swan pastor at First Congregational Church. Third and present (1939) Episcopal edifice consecrated.

1859 — Fifth and present Congregational Church built.

1860 — Dyke rebuilt at Little Neck Creek.

1861 — Civil War. Stratford men in Union ranks, women provided comforts for them and for wounded in hospitals.

1862 — The Rev. B.L. Swan, early town historian, resigned as pastor of Congregational Church.

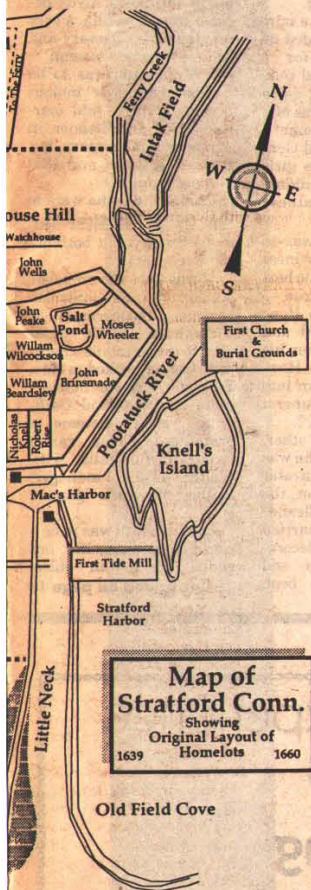
1863 — Company K, 8th Regt., Connecticut National Guard, organized.

1864 — The Rev. Louis R. Christy pastor at First Congregational Church. Christ Church chapel erected.

1865 — End of War.

Continued on page 27

The Story of Stratford



1764 — First time-restriction for taking oysters — ten shillings fine for taking them between April 20 and September 10.

1765 — Golden Hill reservation sold by Indians.

1766 — Honorable William Samuel Johnson appointed by General Assembly to go to England and defend the Colony of Connecticut concerning its title to certain lands. Loss of suit meant threat to Connecticut's charter.

1767 — Johnson successful. Became acquainted with many in high places at court.

1768 — The Rev. Ebenezer Kneeland called to assist Dr. Johnson at Episcopal Church.

1770 — Arrival of John Stirling, son of Scottish

Stratford Class of '27 still meets every year

by Russell L. Priestley

I went to my high school class reunion in July.

When we all started back in 1927, there were 79 of us. Class prophecies were read at graduation day (or sometime) and, looking back, we were a pretty poor

group at predictions!

For example: Howard was to outdo Lindbergh as a pilot owner of a world airline, but had a longer life and probably a happier one with AT&T.

His friend Joe was to be a prison guard and also

ended up, without getting beat up, with AT&T and the Army Signal Corps.

Edith was to have been a detective, but alas, became a bank teller. And Marion had an old folk "hime" but lived out her life as a fine sales lady.

LeRoy didn't have a chance to become an actor. He left us much too soon. Glenwood who was to make it in the movies, ended up at *Reader's Digest* and Jim, the "Follies" producer took over his dad's business in Bridgeport. Gladys, who married a floor walker in our prophesy, actually landed in Elmira (we think).

Then, to show you how accurate our forecasters

were, Ella opened a French Lingerie Shop, with Burdette as her advertising manager, Zelta as her model and Emma her manager. Actually, it went like this. Ella married Lionel after losing her Harold, worked at Baird's in Stratford, as did Lionel. Burdette became a very well loved and respected Methodist minister (advertising lingerie, indeed!).

Zelta was a loving mother and homemaker, Emma went off to the state of Washington to become a teacher.

David Murray, who was a comic gag writer, was supposed to become the editor of the *New York Times*, with Bill his business manager, who, we were told, was a cab driver in Brooklyn. Edith became a teacher, but supposedly was his social editor and the aforementioned Lionel was his circulation manager, but really was an engineer.

Bob was to become a department store tycoon, with Les his advertising cartoonist. Les was one of the closer prophecies. He WAS a good cartoonist, and Byron was to be Bob's store chef, but actually ended up being one of the country's leading linoleum designers.

We come to another Bob, who was to be a Shakespearean actor. Actually did, you might say, act in his profession, as he became the esteemed judge of the Bankruptcy Court in Bridgeport.

Paul, Julius and Charlie, owners of a BIG musical instrument company, had Ruth and Grace as their pianists, musical advisors and social directors, with Margaret as the store nurse. Margaret, in the prophesy, was "right on the money" as she DID end up a registered nurse, head of her department in a hospital for many years.

Paul, if you really want to know is now a valued CPA. Julius, we can't say, haven't heard in years. Charlie was a good storekeeper and eminent poet. Ruth and Grace were teachers (and really could play the piano). Ossie was to have been their employment manager, but alas, turned out to be a promising golfer and motel owner.

I was supposed to turn out to be a Supreme Court Justice but, again alas, ended up a plant manager for a national concern.

In the courts of the land were, supposedly, Ruth and Irene, prominent attorneys. Ruth became a teacher and Irene a very competent librarian. Jim was supposed to become an Ambassador, which wasn't too bad a prognostication. He WAS a field engineer for a world-wide company and then in the Peace Corps, now travels the world and has been everywhere.

Douglas was to be a mining engineer, but ended up selling products for a world-noted electrical company. Sylvia should have been the head mistress of a girls school but became a teacher. Marjorie and Genevieve, who ran the girls school for Sylvia, didn't. They became business women.

Eddie (Edmund) was to have run a tourist business but ended up about the best gag writer in Hollywood — for Jack Benny, Bob Hope and many others. Al and Ed were to have been his travel agents, with Howard, but Al had to run into a banker, Ed to a funeral director and Howard?

Fred, somehow or other, "missed the boat" as he was to have been an illustrator and ran a store "on the hill." Julius and Eleanor were to have been married and become interior decorators and architects and Russ was to have been

their landscape man. Instead, we would have to guess about Julius and Eleanor, but Russ became a "Big Wheel" in Boy Scouting. As an aside, he once, a LONG time ago, held the world record for making fire by friction!

Dotty supposedly was to sculpt the "Wilson Memorial" with Phil and Edith, the construction group that built it, together with Veronica and Elsie, their design team. Dotty became a teacher as did Edith — the others?

Ruth was to run a "string" of beauty parlors, with Beatrice, Helen and Ruby as sales persons. Beac became a secretary, as did Ruby and good ones — Ruth?

Eloise, who was to be a humorist writer, just disappeared, as did Bill.

Elizabeth was to become a librarian, with Alyce the head librarian with Ella and Alice. Elizabeth ended up in business, Alyce became a teacher; Ella, a very fine lawyer's secretary and Alice, a business woman.

Mildred, who was to be an African movie maker, became a nurse and married "Doc" and Eleanor, in Africa as a missionary, but married a judge and DID become a nurse.

Cecilia and Anna were to run the Connecticut Humane Society, but both became teachers.

Al was to be the manager of the New York Giants. He became a businessman at Dictaphone, while John was to be a tennis champion, but he worked in New York as a coffee maker's representative. And Catherine was to become a prominent sheep ranch owner in Australia, with Walter as her manager, neither of which "panned out."

Another Ruth was to be a world champion golfer, but ended up in an office.

Continued on page 18

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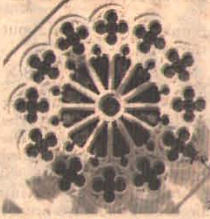
Organ could not hide window

The Congregational Church has always tried to have its music worshipful and in keeping with the religious thinking of its day. It has always sought to have the congregation sing.

One of the early references in the records is that on Oct. 8, 1849 a special meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society was called "to consider the expediency of employing some qualified person to teach sacred music." A committee was appointed to confer with Q. Platt and employ him.

In 1851 the Society, in appreciation for the work of Mr. J.H. Stagg as Chorister and leader of singing, passed a resolution expressing its gratitude for his services and accompanied these words with a nice sum of money.

The music in the Church (we know it is true of the fourth building and it's presumed it was the same for



First Church's Rose window from the outside.

all before it) was led by two men, tenor and bass, whose place was a niche back of the communion table and in front of the high pulpit with its winding stairs.

The pulpit was on the north side of the house. Afterwards a choir was formed and established in the middle of the long gallery opposite the pulpit.

There a bass viol was introduced, afterwards a violin, later a melodeon. When this building (1939 edifice)

was first used, the same plan prevailed, the choir and accompanists were in the east gallery. Mr. Abijeh McEwan played the viol. But the people wanted an organ.

In 1868 an organ was purchased. Where would they put it? It must not hide the rose window in the east, so the Society said.

To solve the problem a gallery was built above the pulpit and the pulpit was pushed forward. It was not orthodox but it was done. There the organ was placed and from there the quartet sang.

People looked up at the choir and sang, if they sang. The change which you now see with the console in front and the semi-chancel effect was brought about in 1928.

From the Rev. Stanley Sellick's 1939 writings.

Book adds color to 350th

by Dorothy Euerle

If you have seen people posing for the camera in front of some of the town's landmarks, they probably are preparing to add their photos to *Picture This... a Time Travel activity Book of Stratford*, produced by Kathy Faggella and Janet Korowitz as their contribution to the 350th Anniversary of the town of Stratford.

"As an almost lifetime resident of Stratford I find myself feeling very proud of this wonderful and unique town," said Faggella. "The spirit of the 350th anniversary spurred me, and my partner Janet Horowitz, to create this book for our town's children and their families.

"As parents we wanted an activity/photo/coloring book that we could use together with our own children to visit various historical sites around town.

"As educators, we wanted more," Faggella added. "We wanted chil-

PICTURE THIS . . .



a time travel activity book

of

STRATFORD

KATHY FAGGELLA by JANET HOROWITZ

The cover of the *Picture This... coloring book.*

dren to visit a place, such as Bond's dock, and realize that this lovely quiet place was once very different and played an unusual role in our history."

"In this case, Bond's Dock was a busy pier for ships traveling to and

from Stratford to many points along the coast and to the West Indies. We wanted to find a way for children to feel the pride in the many things that have happened in Stratford during the last 350 years."

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Celebrating
Stratford's

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Through the years, radio operators have helped town

by James Cebik

Stratford Amateur Radio operations and operators date back to the late thirties. With the advent of Pearl Harbor, and our entry into World War II, all amateur operation was forbidden for the duration of the hostilities.

With the war's ending amateur radio was again permitted with the oldtimers getting back on the air and, in 1948, with the Boothe brothers gift of their estate to the people of Stratford, a small tool shed was given to the Stratford radio amateurs for use as a clubhouse.

The cessation of hostilities brought about the return of the oldtimers into ham radio as well as some young teenagers from the upper grades of grammar schools and high school.

The end of the war brought on an influx of surplus military radio equipment that could be

purchased for almost nothing and be converted cheaply for use in the home.

Some of the veterans of the war, having been initiated into radio communication, retained their interest and became licensed radio amateurs, and embracing the fellowship of the oldtimers, joined the membership of the Stratford radio club.

Young teenagers, in last stages of grammar school and in early high school, became interested in ham radio through their parents' involvement or by reading.

They had received their federal licenses, after passing a code and technical radio examination, that allowed them to operate using the Morse International code, as equipment for radio-phone operation was too expensive and complex except for some very low powered, military

surplus hand held portable gear.

The Stratford Amateur was then, and is now, active in maintaining emergency communications for the town.

During the hurricane of 1955, the sea invasion over the Lordship sea wall had everyone concerned. The amateurs maintained satisfactory emergency communications by relaying messages from Lordship to the former Red Cross Headquarters and the public works building in north Stratford. This net met weekly to ensure preparedness for just such events as the hurricane.

As this is being written, we are getting some of the effectiveness of amateur radio communication as being the only means of getting word of the devastation caused by hurricane Hugo. These amateurs are equipped with portable gear and trained for emergency communication dur-

ing power failures and other losses.

The Stratford Radio Club is in the process of being revitalized with an influx of many new members and, in the past year, has been active in emergency preparedness by operating in a National Field Day event where a station, antenna and equipment, were set up in a given time and emergency power was used with continuous night and day operation for a period of 27 hours.

With the passing of George Grosner (WIASO), who was treasurer of the club and its mainstay, the members decided to elect a new slate of officers.

Allen Thorpe was elected president; Gary Moyher, vice president-treasurer; Douglas Waterhouse, secretary and Tony Vina, communications officer, with the responsibility of maintaining emergency communications for the town of Stratford, the Red Cross, the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and any of the public services needing crisis communication. Our club membership is dedicated to public service, when needed, and the development and enjoyment of communicating locally and throughout the world.

We enjoy a friendship with people of all races in many countries, promoting goodwill wherever our signals and voices can be heard. We, radio ham operators, promote brotherhood and goodwill in our com-

munications throughout the world.

The hobby of amateur radio is vast. There are 950,000 licensed amateur operators throughout the world and, of them, the U.S. and our possessions have a total of 456,000 members with station licenses. To obtain a license to operate an amateur radio station a person, regardless of age, must pass a test in copying International Morse code, a test covering technical radio theory and federal regulations in operating the radio station. The amateur radio station must not be used for financial gain.

No messages are permitted that might compete with telephone or wire services except in emergencies in an area declared by the Federal Communications Commission.

Ham radio is no longer an initially inexpensive hobby. Gone is the era of war surplus equipment when our high school sons were able to buy the surplus radio gear and, with inexpensive and simple modification, be able to have an operable station.

Today, they may have an interest in the hobby they are unable to pursue, unless their parent(s) are hams and have an operating station. The equipment of today is too complex to build and too costly for a person in the process of obtaining an education.

The average ham is a

person who has had his schooling, is married and has his own home. He is established in his community and raising a family,

almost middleaged (whatever that is) or a retired oldtimer with too much time on his hands and nowhere to go.

It is better than a Genie of the magic lamp fame. With ham radio, your voice reaches the far corners of the world at the speed of light. There are no barriers to stop the pleasures of finding friendship all over this world.

'Stratford '89' books available

The Stratford recreation department announces that copies of *Stratford '89* are now available, and may

be purchased at their office at Short Beach for \$2 each. For more information or to reserve copies, call 385-4052.

Copies may also be purchased at Sterling House, the Baldwin Center, Town Hall's Room 1, and Memorabilia (Paradise Green shopping area).

Stratford '89 features creative writings and artwork by town residents, and is published by the Stratford recreation department.

Open Daily
9-8 P.M.



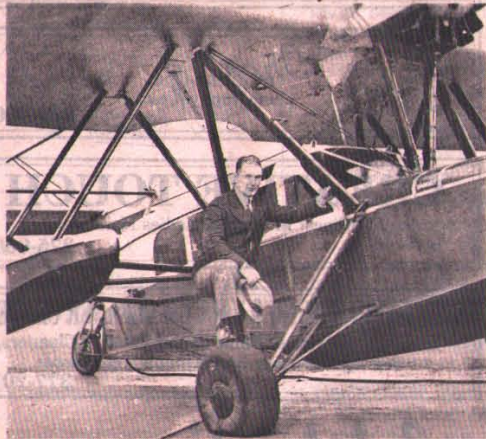
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Stratford's 350th Celebration would not be complete without giving recognition to all the Stratford residents that aren't in the history books but will be remembered just as well. They are the people that believe in doing a good job and a good turn for a neighbor. Think for a moment of the people in your life that, for you, have made Stratford that much better or friendlier. Teachers, shopkeepers, clergy, co-workers, doctors, friends, neighbors and possibly a politician could come to mind. But without a doubt, if you're from Stratford, you've come up with a long list and a warm feeling.

Pictured above: My dad, Nicholas Glad, a Sikorsky engineer beside a Flying Boat built in Lordship.
ANDY GLAD GRAPHIC DESIGN • 720 BARNUM AVENUE CUT-OFF • STRATFORD, CT.

Class of '27 continues meeting

Continued from page 16

George, supposed to head the U.S. Air Force, became a businessman instead and in retirement a noted tomato grower. Gladys, who was supposed to become a health and beauty spa owner, turned into a very fine secretary, who couldn't be replaced until very recently.

So, if you would like to know just who all these very nice people are, and forgive any mistakes, look them all up in the Stratford High School "Log" for 1927.

Sadly, some of them have gone on before, some of us have met, not too noisily, EVERY year for too many to mention. And this year, again, we'll pick up the old school tie and meet at noon, tell our stories, eat, and about four o'clock, "head for home" — with another year to think about — and offer thanks for, and remember those who, for various reasons, can't "make it" this time around.

For any of you who might just be reading this little

story, who have a class of "yore", we suggest to you that, as we say in our communiques to OUR class, "tempus is fugiting" and that you make an effort to get your class together — we do!

(Russell L. Priestley Sr. was secretary of the Stratford High School Class of 1927. He is a retired manager from General Electric Company and lives at 100 Hinsdale Ave., Winsted 06098.)

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Seeing Stratford grow through the century

by William Mazzadra

IN many ways, the Town of Stratford has always been a dynamic place for me. In all my years as a resident, I could never begin to imagine going to live somewhere else. To this day, I am proud to be a resident of the Town of Stratford.

I have seen many progressive changes in the town from the first decade of the 20th Century to the present epic moment of the town's 350th Anniversary and, notably, on the threshold of the final decade that will lead us to the 21st Century.

My parents were immigrants from Italy and settled in East Hartford on Darlin Street where I was born. But my native city didn't get to enjoy the privilege of knowing me for long.

When I was three or four, they took up residence at 28 Frash Street, which is

about 200 feet west of Frash Pond. It was a cute bungalow to which my father kept making additions as the family increased to eight children.

The surrounding area consisted of woods, farmlands, dirt roads and drainage ditches, particularly on Woodend Road, just a block north from Frash Street.

North of Woodend Road, with the wide drainage ditch running closely parallel, was the "big woods," from which Woodend Road was apparently named.

The "woods" stretched as far north as Honeyspot Road. But Honeyspot Road was only a wide swath of clearing over which horse-drawn wagons traversed. To the other side, the woods continued on to a point close to Stratford Avenue.

There were some clearings in between where early settlers moved in and

cultivated small farming plots.

Honeyspot School was built on the northerly side of Honeyspot Road, somewhere between Sedgewick Avenue and Birdseye Street, and was surrounded by well spaced trees and honey bees with their nests hanging on the lower branches of the trees.

There were times when, during school recess, some of the kids, prompted by a little bit of deviltry, would

throw stones at the nests.

On one occasion — I remember it quite clearly — one of the braver of the kids went up too close to the nest and threw his stone. The result was shocking and painful. A swarm of bees came at him from all sides. His face was full of bumps. We had to apply first aid. What did we use? Mud packs!

To the south of Woodend Road, however, looking toward the Sound from our

great area in the Frash Pond community and farther north to several blocks short of Honeyspot Road. My mother and father and many other residents had to be rescued from waist-deep flood waters.

It was not too long after the 1955 flood that the Old Burma Road (now Access Road) was built. It is a link between South Main Street near Textron Lycoming and Lordship Boulevard. The

Timothy Ryan, who had large tracts of farmland surrounding his home on the south bank of Frash Pond. The farmland was situated in part of the area on which Textron Lycoming is now located and, on the opposite side of South Main Street stretched out from his home southward to or nearby the Bridgeport Air Center (Igor Sikorsky Memorial Airport).

The rest of the farmland southward on both sides of South Main Street was owned by a farmer named Sniffin. Sniffins Lane, which runs between Textron Lycoming's sprawling plant and its south parking lot, was, undoubtedly, named after the former owner of that farmland.

It's an interesting coincidence, it seems to me, that in the later years which followed (1951 to 1970), I was employed in that same area of my childhood strivings — in Avco Lycoming's accounting department.

Frash Pond is the landmark of my early youth. I remember, as if it were only yesterday, when the farmer's son built a large ice boat with tall sails. In the wintertime, we'd set sail on the pond's frozen surface. It was absolutely exhilarating.

At Frash Pond, there were many activities for all people in the area such as fishing, swimming, boating and winter sports. It was the pride of the neighborhood. When I would be at the pond, my mother used one of those police whistles to call me home.

In those days, the Pond would reach a frozen surface of up to four inches or more. This brings us to the practice of spearing eels which we engaged in during the winter months. To catch them, we had to use an axe to chop a round hole in the thick ice.

A spear attached to a long pole was submerged into the hole until it hit bottom, then jabbing the spear into the water bed in successive strokes would snare the eels. Eels were always

Continued on page 21



Photo courtesy of Barbara Sirois

The writer urges protection of the area salt marshes. He has seen their protection and values over the years.

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Frash Street home, there was an expanse of beautiful meadows, which spread out southward all the way to the Salt Creek which winds through the marshes to the western tip of Frash Pond.

Its glory, with the numerous spring and summer perennials springing up between the green blades of grass, attracted many to it.

There were sinister processes at work, however, which I noticed from time to time in my early youth. Flood waters were beginning to spread over the meadow. In time, the oncoming hurricanes threatened Frash Pond residents. Then came 1955's Hurricane Diane, with flood waters inundating a

roadbed was raised to act as a dike against flood waters spilling into the populated areas. In this way, the marshland stands as a natural frontier for environmental protection.

In addition to the preservation of wildlife, we are engaged in a struggle against the elements of nature, and I fervently believe that the marshlands should not be tampered with, that any kind of development there would defeat the good that has been done and endanger the safety of residents. I have seen it happen to my parents.

Starting at the age of eight, I worked a few years after school hours and on weekends for a farmer,



Continue the Spirit

AUCTION

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Writer watches transformation into urban area

Continued from page 20
plentiful in Frash Pond in those days. We would use buckets for our catch. On one occasion, the farmer used a 55 gallon drum and filled it almost to the top. That's a lot of eels!

What I enjoyed most, however, was the herring catch. The herring were eight to 10 inches long — some (even) bigger. The best season was late March and April. They would come close to shore in groups of anywhere between 10 and 15.

I could see the water churning just below the surface. Then, suddenly, they would make a concerted splash. That was the cue — at that instant, dashed forward with a quick scoop of a net attached to a six foot pole, I would have two or three of them bagged. I had become proficient at it.

There came a time when I had discarded my bucket because it was too small to hold the (ever) increasing catch and used my father's wooden wheelbarrow.

Some days, I'd fill it up with the catch and would wheel it around the neighborhood selling the herring for five cents each.

My brother and I had built a raft with a diving board attached. We'd paddle the raft at different points on the Pond, not too far from shore, and drop anchor for diving. We

always had a rowboat nearby in case something would go wrong with the raft.

We often used this rowboat as a precautionary accompaniment when swimming clear across the Pond. One "rower" on the boat would follow the swimmer during a cross-river swim. Not all succeeded in the event but, then, the boat was always nearby to pick them up.

I swam across that pond several times. But one time and that was the only time, I made a two-way effort at it and succeeded. However, after the aches and pains of that incident, I swore I would never do it again. Of course, we had just about reached our teens during those events.

It had always been said of Frash Pond that there was a particular spot somewhere at its center where you cannot touch bottom. The rumor was prevalent back then. One day, the farmer's son went out on a rowboat to check the truth of the rumor. A 40 foot pole did touch the bottom of the pond at one point, but didn't at another.

My early grade school years, up to the fourth grade, were at Sedgewick School at the corner of Woodend Road and Sedgewick Avenue. A small building on the school grounds was used for a lavatory.

The buildings are no longer there but the memories live on. A green with a few park benches now marks the spot. It seemed a long walk from Frash Street to Sedgewick School, especially during winter, but not so long as to the Honeyspot School, where I was transferred for the higher grade school years.

After leaving the farm (I was 13 then), I worked in a shack, after school hours and on weekends, on the shores of the Housatonic where duties involved sorting and cleaning oysters.

The shack was located almost directly in back of the present site of the American (Shakespeare) Festival Theatre. The great awakening regarding that shack came to me shortly after taking the tours following ceremonies on Academy Hill.

That same shack, now known as the Katharine Hepburn Cottage, once carried my footprints. It was the very same "oyster shack" in which I had worked so hard as a boy so many years ago.

We always revered Academy Hill even when we were kids. It was the site of many inspiring class trips led by our fourth grade teacher. It also served as our local meeting spot on the way to Stratford Center.

To own a bike in those days and to ride it was

quite an accomplishment. Dirt roads and wagon tracks were somewhat of a hindrance but it was fun just the same. There was a day in early March when a friend and I were racing along Woodend Road. My friend was several yards ahead of me.

As we sped along, the front wheel of my bike hit a rut in the dirt road, resulting in an unintended swooping dive into the water-filled drainage ditch.

My head struck the bottom of the ditch and, for a moment, I was senseless but, somehow, I had the presence of mind to pull myself up by grasping the long weeds at the side of the ditch.

When I stood at the road shivering and dripping, I yelled to my friend, "Hey, I fell in the ditch." He just looked back at me and kept on going! I did lose the race.

Those were the days of kerosene lamps and coal burning stoves. No air conditioning. No heating ducts. My father made an opening in the ceiling above the stove for heating the upstairs bedrooms. That was ingenuity. It raised the temperature a few degrees in the cold of winter.

Avon Park — that rings a familiar note to my contemporaries of Stratford. It was a ball park. Baseball and football contests were held there — mostly baseball.

And it was situated at the general site of the Stratford Town Fair, which succeeded the Farmers' Market. The area is bounded by Stratford Avenue and Honeyspot Road.

There wasn't a week that went by without a baseball game. Of course, we cheered our home team and specifically the pitcher, Jack May. He was a terrific player, who threw the ball with the "speed of light."

At times, he'd get us together in front of my home on Frash Street and promote a race around the block. The way he had it set up, we would run in opposite directions and the one returning at the starting point first was the winner.

In the early 1920s, we'd cross over the "Great Meadows" westward from the Frash Pond area to board the Lordship Trolley, which made its run between Lordship and

Bridgeport at the corner of Hollister and Stratford Avenues.

By that time, the horse drawn rail cars of the late 19th century had been replaced by an electrified system which was eventually consolidated by the Connecticut Railway and Lighting Company.

In an area between Surf Avenue and the Stratford Town Fair, there was the old trolley car yard. We called it the "Car Barn" because there was a large barn which housed some of the trolleys during repair work.

In time, the scattered trolleys in the yard accumulated and became unsightly. However that may be, the transformation from an electric railway system of transportation to one with large buses spewing carbon monoxide into the air has something to be said in favor of the old trolleys.

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Grave engravings exhibited at library

By Dorothy P. Euerle

THANKS to the unique art of gravestone rubbing, images and epitaphs of 18th century gravestones in New England are not in danger of oblivion or permanent illegibility from the harsh realities of time and the elements.

This relief surface reproduction technique captures the original engravings of 18th century designs of funerary iconography.

An exhibit of 18th century gravestone rubbings will be on display during October at the Stratford Library, 2203 Main St.

Many of the rubbings on exhibit will be from the Stratford, Milford and Fairfield areas.

This exhibition consists of a portion of an extensive collection of Milford residents Vincent and

Kathleen Lattanzi, who have been laboring at this craft for the past 18 years.

"Images of winged death heads, soul effigies, skull and crossbones, floral designs and other engravings of early Puritan religious symbolism, connotating deep spirituality, grace monuments of antiquity," Lattanzi said.

"Passages of sacred scripture as well as poetry were inscribed as epitaphs upon the stonework."

A common central theme or message reiterated over and over again can be discerned by this example:

*As you are now,
so once was I;
As I am now,
so you must be.
Prepare for death
and follow me.*

Also appearing quite often on these tablets of contemplative wisdom

Continued on page 23



Photo by Michael Kolster



Photo by Dorothy P. Euerle

The Old Congregational Burying Ground stone fence and memorial gateway were erected and presented by the Mary Stillman Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and dedicated in May 1907. An exhibit of area 18th Century gravestone rubbings will be on display during the month of October at the Stratford Library.



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Weight loss and speed of loss vary with each individual. © 1999 Diet Center.

Stones being preserved

Continued from page 22 were the simple Latin words "Memento Mori," translated meaning "Remember Death."

Lattanzi said, "To remember our own mortality and to perceive the spiritual vision of a life after death in eternity was and is the constant message of our sisters and brothers of Colonial times who have gone before in the sign of Faith."

Besides the obvious beauty and profundity of the message, Lattanzi cited another reason for creating the rubbings.

"This type of stone carving is one of the earliest art forms we have of early New England America," Lattanzi said. "Gravestone rubbing helps to promote the preservation of these stones and the museums without walls within which they are contained."

The upkeep, preservation and restoration of early Colonial/Revolutionary Burying Grounds is a deep concern.

"Other pertinent aspects of gravestone rubbing facilitating historical and genealogical concerns should not be overlooked," Lattanzi said.

"We hope this exhibition of our work will help raise consciousness towards a realization of the preciousness of these unique, irreplaceable relics of stone and the eternal message they convey for all of us and for those who will come after us. Memento Mori."

Here Are A Few Points To Help You Celebrate Stratford's 350th.

Don't put your party hats away just yet. Now you can earn an extra .350 over our one-year rate with our special 350-Day Anniversary CD. Plus we're offering the chance for one lucky person to win \$350 in our anniversary drawing.† You see, we're proud to be a part of Stratford's past and look forward to being part of its future. Stop by your local Stratford branch office. But don't wait, the party won't last forever.

350 Store to close Oct. 20

The 350th Store will be closing its doors on Oct. 20.

Drastic reductions will be taken on all merchandise.

T-Shirts reduced to \$4.

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† The prize is \$350 in cash. Only one prize will be awarded in Stratford. Only one entry per person per day. The drawing is open to Connecticut residents only, and is not open to businesses, employees of Citytrust, its affiliates, agencies, suppliers, and their immediate families. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. Official drawing rules are available at the Citytrust branches in Stratford.

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'A Walk Through Time' is born

By Dorothy Euerle

ROUGHLY a year ago, as I was driving along Main Street on a very hot and humid afternoon headed toward Bond's Dock where the H.M. Rose was anchored.

I was surprised to see a colorful trolley with people of all ages in it, coming toward me on the other side of the esplanade. It turned on Broad Street and I decided to try to track it down at the source.

This proved to be a bit difficult since Academy Hill was cordoned off and I could see a pink tent on the hill and several policemen at the entrances to the street, which meant there had been a ceremony of some sort.

As I continued on my way, I could see several

young couples walking along Elm Street with a book in one hand, looking as if they were trying to identify some landmarks in the historic area around Academy Hill. All along the way, there were people walking or driving slowly by, with the person in the passenger seat pointing toward a landmark.

Later, I found this had been an introductory ceremony launching *A Walk Through Time*, by Barbara Sirois of Huntington, and that two of the guides, dressed in colonial garb portraying famous men from Stratford, were none other than Senator George Gunther and State Representative J. Vincent Chase.

Sirois later told me that Sikorsky had sponsored the first printing of 2,000 copies of her book, which

was distributed widely and the supply was almost completely exhausted on that first day. Copies were soon depleted in the library and the Stratford Historical Society.

In a letter to Sirois, Superintendent of Schools Walter Dunbar was so impressed with the publication that he requested copies for use in social studies classes in the Stratford public school system.

Recently, with Sirois' permission, a committee headed by Frank DeLuca, community relations manager at Textron Lycoming, wrote to the business community seeking contributions in order to reprint the book.

Single copies are now available without charge in the Stratford Library Association and at the Strat-

ford Historical Society, which Sirois has designated as distribution points, so individuals may join in "A Walk Through Time" with Barbara Sirois. A special supply has been set aside for co-sponsors of the reprint.

Sirois explained to me how she came to write *A Walk through Time — Walking Tours of Stratford, Connecticut* and I will let her share with our readers "her story."

"I was born and raised in Stratford and spent some of the happiest days of my life here — and so, when I decided to put together a walking tour of Stratford, I drew upon some of the stories and legends that I had heard way back when I was growing up here — that was about 100 years ago, or so it seems.

"Of course, the imaginations of children are fertile grounds for some very interesting stories but, then, even the most unbelievable tales can usually be traced back to some basis in fact. To begin with, I established various criteria for my research.

"First and foremost, I set about locating the actual facts. Not a lot had been written about Stratford, but I was able to utilize a few very good resources. One of the difficulties, however, was that some of the present day local experts had some strong differing opinions.

"What I decided to do was, in all cases, to simply present the clear-cut facts. In some situations, that was not so easy. Then I would present 'all the possibilities' and allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusion, which I think is always much more interesting for the reader because, then, the reader becomes a participant.

"Secondly, I decided to focus on a geographic area that would provide an abundant concentration and assortment of interesting buildings and area legends — this eventually evolved into two geographic areas and two walks — the first walk encompassed the area surrounding the center of Stratford and Academy Hill, a location that served as the focus of most of the town's activities for some 200 years — this I called the Academy Hill Walk.

"The second walk is known as the Shore Walk — it encompasses Bond's Dock, which was once a busy wharf, with both commercial and passenger service, and it runs along Shore Road, a very interesting section of town.

"Thirdly, and probably the most difficult, was determining what to include and what not to include — so I took a representative sampling of a variety of things, while also including readily recognizable characters, who made up part of Stratford's unique history

— from people like George Washington, who historical records tell us visited Stratford on at least seven different occasions, to the Goodwife Bassett, the famous witch.

"I would like to tell you a story about an event that occurred not too far from where we are right now.

"This particular story is not included in the walking tour booklet, only because it is geographically removed from the main section of town.

"Back in the year 1762, in the early part of the season, there fell over this section of the country, the most severe drought ever experienced. From early June until the following October, not a drop of rain fell. The waters of the Housatonic River were unfit for drinking purposes — even the cattle refused to drink from it.

"During this time, the Rev. Nathan Birdseye and his family lived high on a hill in the beautiful village of Oronoque. Usually, in dry weather, the springs on the minister's farm became so low that they had to look to their neighbors' generosity in the valley below for water.

"This time, however, the situation for everyone — even in the valley — reached a critical point.

"That morning, the minister shared the awful news with his family that their precious water supply was no more, and they prayed together for some solution. Then, after the morning meal, he went for a walk, as was his custom, to ponder and pray over the desolation around him. As he walked slowly over his fields, his attention was attracted to a small dark spot in the earth. He reached down and felt the spot where the earth was moist with water. He called to his men to bring shovels — and at last, at a depth of three feet, the pent up spring burst forth. And that is how Prayer Spring Road was named."

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350th Celebration notebook

Nutmeg Stamp Club gives check to Commission

Edward Johnson, president of the Nutmeg Stamp Club will formally present a check for \$350 to Joseph Stavola, chairman of the 350th Commission, on Oct. 5 at 10 a.m. in the chairman's office.

This check represents the profits from the sale of the Club's philatelic covers which it issued for special events throughout the 350th celebration year.

"The Nutmeg Stamp Club is proud to be an active member of the community and salutes the town of Stratford on this happy occasion," Johnson said.

Covers may still be obtained at the 350th Store in the Dock Shopping Center or through the Nutmeg Stamp Club which meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Baldwin Center, 1000 West Broad St.

Oratorio Choir ends 350th with Christmas concert

As the musical finale of Stratford's 350th anniversary, the Stratford Oratorio Choir will present a concert of Christmas music on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4 p.m.

The program will include Benjamin Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" with harp accompaniment.

All who enjoy singing are invited to join the group at the Tuesday evening rehearsals, beginning Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 2301 Main St.

If interested, contact the church's musical director, Elizabeth Brodeen at 259-8345.

Cavalcade of bands

The Bunnell High school Marching Band of Stratford will host the 10th Annual Cavalcade of Marching Bands, rain or shine, on Saturday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m. at the Bunnell Field. Admission is \$5 and tickets may be obtained at the gate. Refreshments will be available.

The Cavalcade is a marching band competition which, this year, will host 15 bands from Connecticut and sur-



Photo by Michael Kolster

Keeping watch

This gargoyle on top of the Sterling House has kept watch over the town for many years. As you look around town, much of the early architecture and style from the colonial days remains intact even 350 years later after people settled here.

rounding states.

Harvest Fair in November

The Stratford Women's Club will participate in Stratford's 350th Anniversary with a gigantic Harvest Fair, featuring 50 exhibits, on Sunday, Nov. 12 at the Stratford Armory.

350th 42-mile relay

Four towns in the Constitution State celebrating their 350th anniversaries — Stratford, Fairfield, Guilford and Milford — will sponsor a 42-mile relay run from Guilford to Fairfield on Saturday, Oct. 7, beginning in Guilford at approximately 6 a.m.

The Stratford delegation will meet the Milford runners and then leave from Stratford's Dock Shopping Center, run through the center of town and along the Founder's Day Parade route minutes before the Parade gets underway. Then core runners will run through Bridgeport and into Fairfield. Residents in the town are invited to join the core runners as they pass through their communities. Applications may be filled out at The Bank Mart Branches.

Family Reunions

The National Society of the Descendants of John and Elizabeth Curtiss 50th annual meeting will take place on Saturday, Oct. 7, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Christ Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 2000 Main St. Society members and relatives will view the Founders Day Parade from about 11 a.m. and box lunches will be available. The Society will have an entry in the parade.

The Society of the Hawley Family 60th reunion will be held in conjunction with the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the founding of Stratford on Saturday, Oct. 7 at 10 a.m. in the Stratford United Methodist Church Parish Hall, 2600 Main St. There will be a box lunch, an historic walk through the town's historic district to the cemetery for a rededication. A dinner will be followed by a program with Town Historian Lewis Knapp, as speaker. Cost to attend is \$15; to join the society \$3.

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Women played vital role with no recognition

It was said that "the women were the backbone of the church and they are fast coming to the front..."

The faithful services of the women to this Church (First Congregational) without representation for about 290 years would indicate that much of what the "parson" said is true.

A woman in 1826 was the assistant in the first Sunday School. In 1843 a Ladies' sewing Society came into being. Their labors gave to the Church blinds in 1844, a carpet in 1846, lamps in 1853. When this Church was dedicated the women gave a Festival.

The Pastor (Rev. Sellick) recently found one of these tickets. It reads:

"One of the tickets used at

the Festival held in this house while unfinished (July 4, 1859) by the Ladies

of the Congregation. The affair was an exceptional one in every respect and yielded nearly \$700 profit."

On Jan. 4, 1886 it was recorded in the Society's minutes, "Resolved, that a vote of thanks be entered in the Society's records to the Ladies of the Church for their efforts in putting a new and beautiful carpet upon the Church without cost to the Society."

Fifteen years before this (June 29, 1871) a petition signed by 70 women was presented "to those authorized to form, perpetuate or annul, the rules of the Church that the word 'male' in the Standing

solved that a change at this time is inexpedient." The vote was 9 to 7.

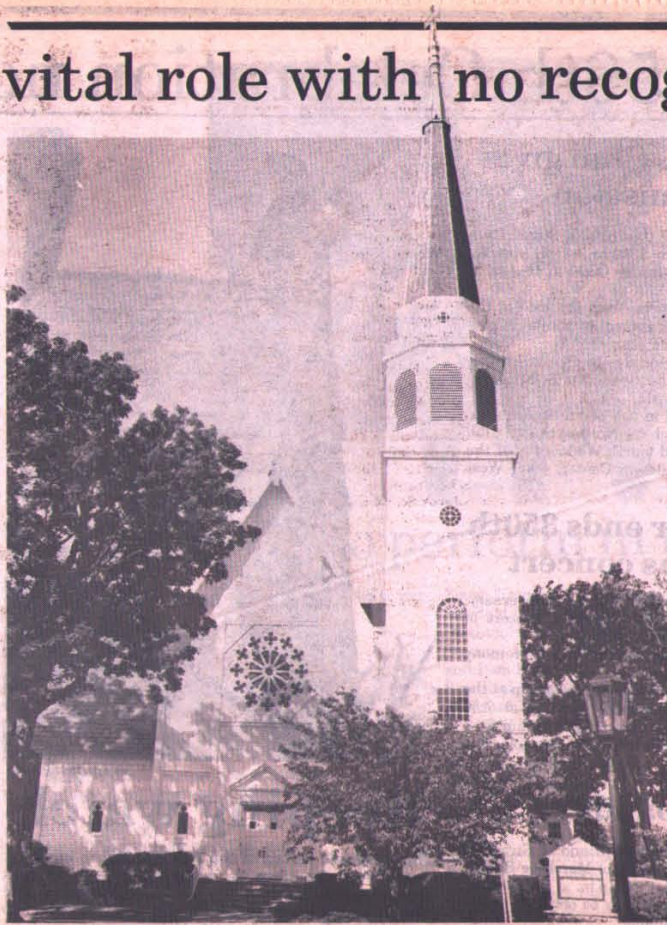
The women were still loyal to the Church. When Packard Hall was built the Ladies Aid turned over to the committee \$1,000. When we renovated this building in 1928 the Ladies assumed responsibility for the carpets and cushions. Now they are reducing the indebtedness (1939).

As time went on, more and more recognition was given to the women in the rules and work of the Church. Though denied a vote in 1871, in 1901 the Church had five deaconesses. The rules of 1905 show a board of Deaconesses apart from the standing committee.

In 1910, the office of Deaconesses was changed to Visitor, six were named and became a part of the Standing Committee, and continued so under the new Constitution in 1920.

In 1929, the Constitution was changed so that the women might be chosen members of the Board of Trustees. Any office in the Church is now open to any person — man or woman — who is qualified to do it, and all have an equal voice in carrying on the work for which the pastor is grateful.

Rev. Sellick writing in 1939 on the 300th Anniversary of the First Congregational Church and of the Town of Stratford.



A scene of The First Congregational Church as it stands today.

Photo by Michael Kolster

Rules might be stricken out and that all adult members have equal privileges. The rather chilly answer

was that "whereas the government of this Church has been administered by male members for more than 150

years, and whereas no complaint has been made by the petitioners of abuse of power..., therefore it is re-

Stories of Revolutionary days

From writings of the Rev. Dr. Stanley Sellick.

In the days when the Revolution feelings ran at a high pitch, there were lines of cleavage between the "Colonists" and the so-called "Tories."

The church records are explicit in stating that after April 2, 1780, "the church was vacant four years, four months and two days," but tell nothing of what transpired during that time.

The story is told that when the news of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis

to George Washington reached Stratford, the Rev. Israhiah Wetmore was preaching.

The message was carried to the pulpit. The pastor, straightening himself to his full height (six feet, six inches) made known the message and added: "It is no place for boisterous demonstrations in the house of God, but we may, in giving three cheers, only go through the motions."

It may be that this story is about as apocryphal as the following which was told by Ella Only Kirk in

Lippincott Magazine, July 1879.

"The Episcopal ministers, whose strength lay in traditional authority, naturally took the side of England. Having prayed so long for 'our excellent King George,' they found it almost impossible to leave out such supplications.

"One of them uttered this prayer by inadvertence after the war began; then seeing a threatening movement in his congregation he corrected himself, shouting frantically, 'Oh Lord, I mean George Washington.' "In the Stratford Church," the rites, "the old prayers were cut short by an arbitrary patriot, who had no notion of uttering 'Amen' to such heresies. 'My grandfather,' so Captain Pulaski Benjamin has told me, 'went to church the Sunday after the battle of Lexington, and

when Mr. Kneeland (the clergyman) read out the prayer for the royal family, he stood up in his pew and declared that no such prayers must be uttered in Stratford... that the name of George III was the name of the worse enemy of everyone in the colony. Mr. Kneeland rose from his knees, shut his prayer book, raised his hand in benediction, and the church was closed until the end of the war."

"We smile when we read these stories, as we smile when we read what the village wit said about the bells of the two churches. The Congregational bell was shrill and thin in tone while the Episcopal bell was deep and heavy. The first said, 'Original Sin! Original Sin!' the other, 'Good old English roast beef! Good old English roast beef.'"

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The History of Stratford

Continued from page 15

1866 — The Rev. William K. Hall pastor at First Congregational Church. Episcopal bell sent to Troy for repairs.

1867 — Beginning of prayer meetings in Putney Chapel.

1868 — Drawbridge collapsed as steamer passed through.

1870 — Legislature authorized construction of a new bridge at the Ferry.

1871 — Two hundred shad caught at one haul in Housatonic River.

1872 — Mr. Sedgewick resigned charge of the Stratford Academy. Building now occupied by the U.S. Post Office (1939), built by St. John's lodge.

1873 — The Rev. Frank S. Fitch pastor of the First Congregational Church. Third bridge over Housatonic at the Ferry completed.

1875 — Fire company organized.

1879 — The Rev. Samuel Howard Dana pastor of First Congregational Church. Death of Mr. Lounsbury, rector of Christ Church. Act of insane wife.

1881 — Academy discontinued, sold and moved to Lundy's Lane by colored citizens for use as a church.

1883 — The Rev. Joel S. Ives pastor at First Congregational Church.

1884 — Old Yellow Mill burned. Built by General Joseph Walker.

1885 — Common schools merged in one graded school at the Center. Stratford Library Association organized.

1886 — St. James R.C. Church incorporated. Cupheag Club organized. Charter granted to build Lordship meadows road.

1887 — Town purchased Masonic Temple for town hall. Housatonic Boat Club organized.

1888 — Great blizzard. Large fair held by Veterans' Association of Co. K.

1889 — Celebration of town's 250th anniversary. Soldiers' monument on Academy Hill unveiled. West Stratford given to Bridgeport.

1891 — Horse-car service to center from Bridgeport.

1892 — Fourth bridge at the Ferry opened to the public.

1893 — N.Y., N.H., and Hartford tracks raised, over-passes made and location of station changed from Linden Avenue to present site.

1894 — First trolley service to Stratford Center. Library building a gift from Mr. Birdseye Blakeman erected.

1895 — Trolley service extended to Washington Bridge and Paradise Green.

1896 — Public Library dedicated.

1897 — Bridgeport Hydraulic Co's water mains laid. Washington school built. Trolley tracks laid on Washington Bridge.

1898 — Pootatuck Yacht Club organized.

1899 — First trolley, over tracks laid to Derby, fell from trestle at Peck's mill. Course of study high school, previously two years, extended to three and soon to four years, as at present.

1900 — The Rev. Cyrus F. Stimson pastor of First Congregational Church. Neighborhood Church organized.

1901 — Advent Chapel on Church Street, now Red Men's Hall (1939), rebuilt for use of Neighborhood Church.

1902 — Third Methodist Church erected and cornerstone placed.

1903 — Methodist Church dedicated.

1904 — The Rev. Edward N. Packard pastor of First Congregational Church. Sedgewick school built.

1905 — Illuminating gas brought to Stratford.

1906 — St. James R.C. Church set apart as a distinct and special parish. Okenuck Tribe of Red Men organized.

1910 — Electric current available for interior lighting.

1911 — Bridgeport Board of Trade proposed the annexation of Stratford. Much opposition. Town voted street lighting, more equipment for fire department and salary for chief. Franklin School dedicated.

1912 — Talk of borough-form of government. A newspaper *The Stratford Times* started. Tuttle building completed.

1913 — St. James R. C. Church edifice erected. Moving picture theatre opened. Postal carrier service instituted.

1914 — Death of the Rev. N.E. Cornwall, for 22 years Rector of Christ Church.

1915 — Homes of the Stratford Trust Co. and Telephone Co. erected.

1916 — Packard Hall opened for use. Episcopal Parish House built. Nichols Ave. and Garden Schools built. Stratford chapter of Red Cross organized.

1917 — The Rev. Robert C. Whitehead pastor of First Congregational Church. United States entered European War. Honeyspot school built.

1918 — Armistice signed.

1919 — Agitation over "Port of Bridgeport" proposition. Lovell building erected. Red Cross nursing service organized.

1920 — Trunk sewer and disposal plant completed. American Legion organized.

1921 — Present Washington Bridge, the fifth, opened. Council-Manager form of town government adopted. Center School rebuilt, having been badly damaged by fire.

1922 — Sterling Memorial Hall built. Stratford Baptist Church organized.

1923 — Holy Name of Jesus R.C. Church organized.

1924 — Post Office building destroyed by fire.

1925 — Stratford Historical Society incorporated.

1927 — The Rev. F. Stanley Sellick pastor of First Congregational Church. Visit of former Lord Mayor of Stratford upon-Avon.

1928 — Airport officially opened. Present Masonic Temple completed. Wilcoxson School built and Putney School reopened.

1929 — Stonybrook School opened. St. Nicholas Russian Church established.

1930 — Birdseye School opened. War Memorial placed on West Broad Street Green.

1931 — American Legion Drum Corps organized. Columbia University presented gate for Episcopal burying grounds in memory of the Johnsons.

1932 — Sterling House given to Stratford by Will of Miss Cordelia Sterling.

1933 — James Mollison and Amy Johnson, English fliers, made non-stop flight from Perdine, Wales to Stratford, Conn.

1935 — Ground broken for present town hall.

1936 — Trolleys replaced by buses. Cornerstone of new town hall set in place.

1937 — St. James Church Parish Hall completed. Lordship School opened.

1938 — Hurricane. Hon. Raymond E. Baldwin elected Governor of Connecticut.

1939 — Sept. 14, first flight of VS-300, world's first practical helicopter. Sept. 30, Tercentenary week begins — three day pageant at Longbrook Park. Oct. 7, William Samuel Johnson Day parade has 2,000 marchers, 23 floats, nine military units, the governor and his foot guard.

1940 — Sept. 2, Merritt Parkway bridge opens. Oct. 1, XF4U-1 piloted by Lyman Bullard is first American fighter plane to exceed 400 miles per hour in level flight.

1943 — Vought Sikorsky divides into Chance Vought and Sikorsky; then Sikorsky moves to Bridgeport.

1949 — Chance Vought moves to Dallas, Texas. Oronoque Orchards begins; Mrs. Hildreth (Betty Peck) Winton bakes pies for her college alumni fund drive. Feb. 21, David Boothe dies and wills Boothe Park to Stratford.

1951 — February, Avco-Lycoming moves into old Vought plant to make engines. July 5, Ground broken for two junior high schools; Johnson and Wooster. Nov. 1, City Savings Bank opens branch in Stratford at the Green.

1953 — Dec. 21, People's Savings Bank opens first branch on Main Street in Stratford.

1954 — Katharine Cornell breaks ground for American Shakespeare Theatre.

1955 — Sikorsky returns to Stratford to a new plant in Oronoque. July 12, First presentation at Shakespeare Theatre is Julius Caesar.

1956 — Jan. 2, Formal opening of Connecticut Turnpike, I-95.

1962 — Oct. 6, Opening ceremonies at Connecticut National Guard Armory.

1963 — Morris Carnovsky plays King Lear. Stratford Trust Co. absorbed by CityTrust.

1964 — January. Stratford Industrial Center Inc. founded to develop 800 acres.

1972 — New solid waste secondary treatment plant and extended mains.

1979 — Nov. 1, Raymond E. Baldwin Senior Center opens.

1982 — Aug. 8, Expanded library dedicated.

1983 — July 21, State pays theater mortgage and property becomes state's first state cultural park. Refurbishment of plant commences.

1988 — Raybestos factory is closed. Oct. 21, University of Connecticut President Dr. John Casten announces formation of the Stratford Institute during a reception at American Festival Theatre. December, Stratford Theater closes.

1989 — Stratford's 350th Anniversary celebration

Events from 1637 to 1939 are from the Rev. Stanley Sellick's records on file at the First Congregational Church. Much of the information was compiled by M. Hale and published for the 300th anniversary. Town Historian Lewis Knapp has provided the Bardwith an update from 1939 to 1989. These historical facts were put together by Bard Editor Dorothy Euerle.

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HISTORY

*"A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were PARADISE ENOW!"*

COOKBOOK: Old Stratford recipes have been donated, tested, updated, and gathered together in a cookbook being offered by the Stratford Historical Society. Anecdotes about the people who made and consumed the dishes have been included. This is a companion book to the new history of Stratford "In Pursuit Of Paradise" and refers to this history often.

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