

# The Farmington Historical Society

Preserve to Educate. Educate to Preserve.

Newsletter February, 1995

## 40th Anniversary Celebration

Were you there? Nearly 150 members and guests did come out on that sunny December Sunday to enjoy Fred Warner's talk on mills at the MPS auditorium and the lovely reception hosted by Mario



Zacco at the Grist Mill. Among them were seven past presidents and an impressive number of charter members. Bea Stockwell presented the Society with a handsome plaque from the Town Council. Members were treated to exhibits recalling our activities and accomplishments over the past 40 years, as well as a video loop combining historical town pictures with "snippets" of the Farmington River/Grist Mill scenes from the silent film "Way Down East".

## Historical Happenings

Those with a taste for history can anticipate a feast in Farmington in 1995. The celebration of the town's 350th anniversary has inspired a variety of programs sponsored by the 350th Anniversary Committee, the town museums, libraries, and the Historical Society. Historical Society events include:

Thursday, March 2, 8:00 p.m. The Gables, Dining Room, 20 Devonwood Drive, The Importance of the Connecticut Clock Making Industry in the 19th century and Farmington's Contribution, a presentation by Chris Bailey, Director, Bristol Clock Museum.

Saturday, March 18, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. No Frills Education: An Afternoon in a One-Room Schoolhouse. Featuring a brief history of The Old Stone Schoolhouse followed by group participation in a typical 1790 school day, this program is limited to 12 enrollees. If, however, you are interested in becoming a volunteer at the Schoolhouse and would like to attend as an observer, please call 677-4277 or 677-0059 for information. This program is offered through the Farmington Continuing Education Department. Charge \$10. Reservations required. 677-2139.

Saturday, April 8, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. The Paths They Walked: A Walking Tour of Amistad-Related Sites. Members of the Society will lead tours to sites where the Africans from the Amistad lived, studied, worshipped, and farmed. This program is offered also through the Farmington Continuing Education Department. Charge \$5. For information about tours call 677-2139.

Saturday, May 20, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Special Opening, Day-Lewis Museum of Indian Artifacts and Site Tour: Algonkian Use of the Land. The museum committee of the Historical Society will open the museum and assist in the tours of this rich archeological site. For information about tours call 677-0080 or 677-2754.

Friday, May 26 - Sunday, May 28, 9:00 - 5:00 p.m. Archeological Demonstration Dig. Help dig up the past with archeologist Dr. David Starbuck, who is returning to the site of his 1970s dig at the Day-Lewis Museum. The Lewis Walpole site has been inhabited for over 10,000 years and is rich with relics from the past. The museum displays the artifacts excavated by Dr. Starbuck and teams of Yale students during the 1970's. Dr. Starbuck will teach participants about excavation, cleaning, cataloguing etc. Participants may sign up for one, two, or all three days, depending on demand. Charge \$5.00 per day. Reservations required. There is a 15 person limit per day, and the site will be open only to those enrolled. Participants must be 18 or over. Bring your own brown bag lunch. For information call museum committee members Evan Cowles at 677-0080 or Peg Yung at 677-2754.

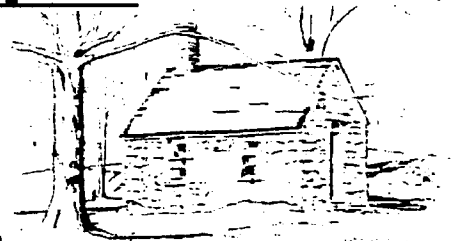
The Day-Lewis Museum will open in March for the season with regular hours on Wednesdays 2-4 p.m. Admission is \$2.00 general, \$1.00 students and seniors, and free for Farmington Historical Society members. Visits also by appointment.

Sunday, June 4, 5:30 p.m. Riverside Cemetery Walk. Join Charlie Leach and Barbara Donahue in an historical tour of the Garden Street Cemetery. Meet at the Main Gate.

Thursday, Sept. 28, 7:00 p.m. Farmington Library, Prof. K.L. Feder, Dept. of Anthrop., Central Ct. State Native American Use of the Land.

#### The Old Stone Schoolhouse: Once More a Lively Place

While the little old schoolhouse at Red Oak and Coppermine may appear quiet and unused during these winter months, there is a lot stirring there and before long, like the daffodils, it will burst into bloom. We're so proud of our beautifully restored building and eager to share it with town residents. A new Schoolhouse Committee, headed by Harriet Margolis and Marvin Anderson, both nearby West District residents, has been busy making plans for events and activities. This committee meets at the Schoolhouse on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. All welcome.



Do you have ideas? Would you like to take part? Volunteers are needed; the opportunities are many and varied. We're trying to avoid the "committee trap" of too many meetings and would like to have small groups - as small as 2 or 3 people - who would work on their own areas of interest. We also need greeters/interpreters for our Sunday openings May through October. Just two hours on Sunday afternoon. Family groups are ideal for this, or neighbors

or friends. So many interesting jobs are available: exhibit production, refreshments for parties, research on School House and West District history. Call for more details. 677-4217 or 677-0049.

The School House is available for community use! Help us publicize the fact that community organizations as well as school groups can hold small meetings or other events in this building. To that end, we're planning a Sunday afternoon reception APRIL 2 for teachers, PTO representatives, Scout leaders, club officers etc.

Regular Sunday hours begin mid-May. Opening party: JUNE 11. Plan to visit and enjoy games, a spelling bee, refreshments and more. See our restored 1790 schoolroom with its reconstructed fireplace and let our Schoolhouse Scholars take you back in time.

#### For Sale: Memories! School House Items!

Some items that were in the Schoolhouse before the restoration are for sale. Make an offer! Leave a message: 678-1645

- Ye Old Chapel Stove, a small coal stove in excellent condition, complete with pad, pipe, coal bucket and tools, even stove polish.
- The old schoolroom chandelier --Copper lining for dry sink
- A few desks, early 1900s --Dishes from the chapel
- Window screens--wood folding doors--a small amount of wainscoting

Sales for the Schoolhouse: Attractive cream T-shirts with drawing of the school. All sizes \$8 or \$10

Schoolhouse notecards \$5 Beanbags, handmade \$.50 - \$1.50  
Pocket Dolls \$5 Decorative baskets, Schoolhouse buttons & pencils  
All purchases go entirely to the Schoolhouse Restoration Fund.

#### Memento Mori Visit

Behind the brown Egyptian gate on Main Street lies an acre of ancient Farmington marked with tablets and slabs of brownstone slate and marble. Scores of our forebears rest here, and their names and histories call to mind the earliest days of the settlement. Led by Barbara Donahue and Charlie Leach, a small but enthusiastic group toured the old graveyard on a cold November afternoon. We retold the old tales of town clerks and preachers, smallpox and tuberculosis epidemics, patriots and Tories. We finished with a spot of cheer, by flashlight.

Hundreds of markers remain in the old cemetery, which is maintained by the Village Green and Library Association. While the earliest are unmarked, most are in excellent condition and furnish a vivid record stretching from the town's early days to the late 19th century. Buried here are early pastors and town clerks. Here lie too Judah Woodruff, the housewright, and countless Harts, Wadsworths, and Cowleses. Also here are little Shem, child of black slaves, and Matthias Leaming the Tory. Leaming's headstone states that he has "got beyond the reach of persecushion (sic)", and faces opposite to all the others, maintaining his prickly independence from his neighbors even in death.

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### Amistad Tour Guides Needed

As the Amistad Incident story is more widely taught and Farmington's role in it receives nationwide recognition, our Amistad tours are coming into great demand. We need more guides. We also would like to have some volunteers who might not wish to "give the talk" but could help greatly in keeping a tour group together, enabling an experienced guide to handle a larger group.

It's not at all difficult- a pleasant one to one and a half hour walk in the Village. We can give you a written tour script and a sample tour. Tours are booked upon request from groups. Please call Society Headquarters 677-1645 or Carol Leonard 677-4217.

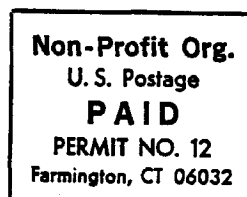
### 1995 Nominations

The Nominating Committee for the June '95 - June '96 year will present a slate of officers and directors at the annual meeting in June. Please contact one of them - Ken Olsen, Jim Calciano, Ann Reed - if you are interested in serving on the board or on a committee. Our increasingly active organization needs active members!

The FHS office, in the Village Library, is open on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and by appointment. Phone 678-1945. There is also a telephone at the Old Stone Schoolhouse. 674-9931.

Newsletter Contributors: Evan Cowles, Charlie Leach, Carol Leonard Peg Yung. Ann Reed, editor.

The Farmington Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1645  
Farmington, CT 06032



Dr. & Mrs. Charles Leach Jr.  
174 Main St.  
Farmington CT 06032