

The Farmington Historical Society

Preserve to Educate. Educate to Preserve.

January, 1996

THE CHINA TRADE: IN FARMINGTON; IN CONNECTICUT

The Historical Society and the Stanley-Whitman Museum present a multi-media program on the economic and artistic legacy of this trade.



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1996
7:00 P.M.
THE ANNEX, STANLEY-WHITMAN MUSEUM
HIGH STREET, FARMINGTON, CT

Jean Johnson: "The Early China Trade in Farmington". How did this land-locked village come to play a leading role in the 18th century development of a trade which was to stimulate economic growth throughout New England? Why might we argue that the appearance of industry in this region was related to the success of this trade?

Jean Johnson, the Town Historian, holds two Master's Degrees from Trinity College. Results of her research have been published in "Retrospection" and in curricula guides and texts for the Farmington School system. In researching the early development of the town of Farmington, from colonial settlement to the rise of industry in Unionville, she became especially interested in the role of the farmer-turned-merchant. She concentrated on uncovering this inland town's connection with the sea. What combination of enterprise, energy and shrewdness led Farmington merchants to expand the more conventional West Indies trade to an adventure in Patagonia and across the Pacific?

Elizabeth Fox: "Chinese Export Trade Goods: Riches of the East in Connecticut." With examples drawn from treasures owned by the Stanley-Whitman Museum and from her extensive slide collection, Elizabeth Fox will demonstrate how this trade grew in the 19th century in the quality and variety of imports.

Ms Fox has been with the Connecticut Historical Society since 1985. She is now Curator and has been responsible for a number of Exhibits there including "Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-Slavery Movement." She has published a variety of scholarly works in state and national journals. Earlier associations included the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society, the National Portrait Gallery, Yale University Art Gallery, and the Wadsworth Atheneum.

OUR ITALIAN ROOTS; THE LENOLESE IN FARMINGTON

October 23rd was Lenolese Society of Farmington day, by proclamation of Town Council Chair Beatrice Stockwell and with the enthusiastic endorsement of over 100 attendees at an evening of reminiscence and family history. The event was co-sponsored by the Lenolese Society and the Farmington Historical Society. It was attended by many descendents of the families who came to Farmington at the turn of the century from Lenola, Italy. There were people of all ages, ranging from Lenolese Society founder Ferdinand Morocco, now in his 90's, to youngsters sitting cross-legged on the floor of Farmington Library's Community Room. Councilman Bob DiPietro, a Lenola descendent, introduced the event by reading the Council's Proclamation. Ercole Labadia, another Lenolese and Executive Vice-President of Eagle Federal Savings Bank, presented a video of Lenola, and a warmly humorous account of the early days in Farmington. He was assisted by Joseph Morocco, President of the Lenolese Society. Finally, Jonathan Galli introduced us to the methods a professional genealogist uses to trace family history back to Italy. Jonathan is with the New England Historic and Genealogical Society and traces his ENGLISH ancestry to the Juds and Lewises, original settlers of Farmington. The evening finished with confetti and cider and sharing of family stories and photographs.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

The Farmington Historical Society plans a series of programs on our town's ethnic heritage, if there is sufficient interest. To begin we will present a talk on French Canadian and Acadian roots in February. Please contact Charles Leach (677-8076) if you have other suggestions. A presentation on family history and genealogy in general will follow in March. Is there interest in an ongoing genealogy interest group?

AMISTAD VIDEO

The Farmington Society was invited to the premiere of this vivid account of the Mendi Africans in Connecticut because of our assistance in preparing the portion which tells of their time in Farmington. The Society owns a copy and is happy to lend it.

THE FARMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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