

The Farmington Historical Society

Preserve to Educate. Educate to Preserve. October, 1996

AUCTION BENEFIT: FIRST ANNUAL ANTIQUE AUCTION TO BE SPONSORED BY FHS

On Saturday, October 26 the Society will sponsor its first annual antique auction. This auction will be conducted under a tent, rain or shine, behind the Congregational Church, 75 Main Street, on the old Town Green. There will be a preview between 9:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. The auction will start at 11:00 a.m. and end at approximately 4:30 p.m. Mr. Timothy Chapulis of Tim's Antiques, a noted Auctioneer, will conduct the auction. Bring your own chair!

Coordinated by Jim Calciano, this auction will enable your Society to raise much needed funds. Our expenses (the fountain on Main Street, the Stone School House, for example) exceed our income. Please think carefully about what tax-deductible donation you might make. Donations may include furniture (Country, Victorian, or Empire), Collectibles (Hummels, Clocks, Glass, Lamps, Local Memorabilia, Autographs etc.) or other items of interest.

The Society also needs help in organizing and running the event. Can you help with telephoning, with refreshments, or in other ways?

Please call James Calciano: 676-8558 or
Peg Yung: 677-2754 or
David Holmes 677-1132

AMISTAD AND FREEDOM TRAIL EVENTS

Two days of celebrations highlighted Farmington's long history of leadership in the struggle of African Americans for freedom, justice and equality. Coordinated by Peg Yung, Historical Society Vice-President, these events began with a memorial ceremony on September 27 at Foone's grave in Riverside Cemetery. Foone died here after living in town for eight months as a member of the Mendi tribe from Sierra Leone awaiting their return to Africa after achieving freedom. Honored guests and speakers included Florence Dillsworth, mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone; Ambassador John Leigh, and Mohammed Barrie and George Alieu, both of the Sierra Leone Cultural Society. Town Council Chair Beatrice Stockwell and the Rev. Ned Edwards of First Church also participated. After the ceremony, members of the Historical Society conducted walking tours of the town's Amistad-related sites. Included in the the day's program was a luncheon at the Barney House hosted by the Town Council for the visitors from Sierra Leone, local and state officials, Amistad and Freedom Trail leaders and special guests. Representative Demetrios Giannaros and Senator Kevin Sullivan, supporters of the bill authorizing the Freedom Trail, presented the Mayor, the Ambassador, and the Historical Society with a citation from the state legislature.

On Saturday, September 28, runners from Farmington High School and Miss Porter's School led the town's participation in the opening of the Freedom Trail. The runners, carrying an 1840 lamp symbolic of those used by runaway slaves, made stops at several sites connected with the Amistad case and the Underground Railroad. The Trail consists of places of the Underground Railroad where slaves were hidden, homes of abolitionists who were prominent in the struggle against slavery and civil rights, churches that were centers of organization for justice and the Amistad sites. Farmington plays an important role in this state-wide memorial.

The Town was also well represented on Saturday in the Freedom Trail-African American Parade through Hartford to Keney Park. A horse-drawn wagon carried representations of five of the town's nine Freedom Trail sites: the First Church, the Village Store, the Carriage House, the Samuel Deming House and the Noah Porter House. These representations were executed by Norma Francini, David France and Gretel McCoy. Participants in the parade, representing major figures related to the Amistad incident, included David France, Charlie Leach, Carol Leonard, Peg, Steve, and Lauren Yung.

"BLACK AND WHITE IN A YANKEE TOWN"

Demographic changes have resulted in de facto segregation in Farmington and other suburbs. They became virtually all white in the 20th century. The next newsletter will bring news of an exciting and challenging research project undertaken by interested citizens of the town, with support from the Historical Society. Inspired by an 1880's school photograph, which showed that approximately 20% of the students in a village school were African-Americans, Barbara Donahue, Lisa Johnson, and Ted Lindquist are spearheading an effort to uncover the lost history of African-Americans in Farmington. Anyone interested in this project, or with any information whatsoever about African-American presence in town in the past, should contact Barbara Donahue.

NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

New By-Laws were adopted at the annual meeting in June. Thanks to Fred Mullen Esq., board member, the revised by-laws reduced board size and eased quorum requirements. They are available for review at Society Headquarters. Officers and Directors 1996-97 follow:

President: Charles Leach Vice President: Peg Yung
Secretary: David Holmes Treasurer: Steve Zamsky
Membership: Sandy Grouten

To June, 1997: Peter Bartucca, Jim Calciano, Fred Mullen

To June, 1998: Marvin Anderson, Cynthia Cooper, Ann Reed

To June, 1999: Ronald Bernard, Victoria Gerent, Harriet Margolis,
Elsa Morse

To June, 2000: David Andrews

Please remember that our membership year runs from June to June and that your membership fees play a crucial role in ensuring the Society's financial health. Individual Membership:\$10. Family \$25. Mail to Post Office Box 1645, Farmington, CT 06034.

FHS PROGRAMS 1996-1997

- October 20 Scarecrows at the Schoolhouse (see below)
- October 30 Christopher Bailey, Curator, Clock Museum. "The Beginnings of Mass Production-Clock Making in the Farmington and Naugatuck Valleys." The Annex, Stanley-Whitman Museum. 7:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Museum.
- January 17 Farmington in the Civil War
- February 20 Canal Lecture. "Farmington to Avon."
- April 9 "Black and White in A Yankee Town." A Report on the Black History Project
- May 7 Richard Williams, Curator, The Walpole Museum.
- June 18 Annual Meeting. To be Announced.

OLD STONE SCHOOLHOUSE

Under the guidance of Harriet Margolis, the Old Stone Schoolhouse continues its lively programs. Open all summer on Sundays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., the building welcomed many visitors who came for a tour or to play old fashioned games. They learned something of Farmington's history at the same time.

The annual *Scarecrows at the Schoolhouse* festival will be Sunday, October 20 from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to enter a scarecrow. The scarecrows must be made from materials on hand. No buying anything new! The entries may be delivered to the Schoolhouse anytime between noon and 2:00 p.m. on the day of the contest. Judging will be at 3:00 p.m. As always, refreshments will be served and there will be pumpkin painting, apple bobbing and many other games. Can you help at the Schoolhouse or bake for this event? Call Harriet Margolis, 677-0059.

NEHGS MEETING

On July 12 and 13, 1996, the distinguished New England Historic Genealogic Society held their regional meeting at the Farmington Marriott. Approximately 250 attendees met to explore their interests in local and family history. In order to network and establish a connection with NEHGS, your Historical Society offered a tabletop display of materials related to our town, its history and the activities of the FHS. Activities were coordinated by Charlie Leach.

Our materials were presented by historians Ann Arcari, Peg Yung, Charlie Leach, Ted Lindquist, Marilyn Cohen and Schoolhouse Scholar Sarah Cohen. We offered the exciting Amistad video,* a computer presentation of our new black history undertaking, several maps and pamphlets and sold many copies of Chris Bickford's "Farmington. In Connecticut." Our volunteers also responded to many enquiries concerning Farmington, including a number from people returning to Farmington to trace family roots.

The town loaned us a van and, despite deluges of windy rain, Ann, Peg and Barbara Donahue guided damp but enthusiastic groups on hour-long tours of our historical sights. We believe that our efforts added a lively touch and some welcome local flavor to the NEHGS meeting. And the Farmington Historical Society gained recognition and welcome personal contacts with scholarly historical enthusiasts from all parts of America.

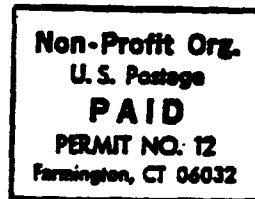
Contributors to the newsletter include Jim Calciano, Charlie Leach, Carol Leonard, Harriet Margolis, and Peg Yung. Ann Reed, editor.

*You may borrow the Amistad video from Society Headquarters.

THE FARMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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