

Preserve to Educate. Educate to Preserve June, 1999

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GRIDLEY-CASE COTTAGES FOR SALE



Well, not exactly. Actually the cottages are hoping that a lot of you will be moved to become "part owners", in a sense. Every donation is so meaningful and will count towards the purchase or repair of a part of the building or the grounds. We hope that every member of the Society will contribute as much as he or she can and thereby enjoy a truly rewarding sense of ownership. What a wonderful gift you can make to future generations by helping to preserve this important part of the town's history and to revive this charming Village nook.

I am pleased to report that as of May we

have received over \$100,000 towards our combined goal of \$350,000. This is an encouraging start and we have enough money to begin repairs and restoration. An architectural historian and a landscaping expert have been retained to reveal the secrets of this fascinating property. Following their recommendations, we expect to begin serious work in both areas this summer. A beautiful wrought iron fence will be one of the first renovations you will see. Incidentally, we hope that these experts may present their ideas at the upcoming annual meeting on June 23.

So, to members and friends and businesses

who have already made contributions, we thank you very much! Others may consider a variety of ways to help including and especially tax deductible gifts of cash or securities. Many corporations offer matching gift programs for employees and retirees. One of our members with an upcoming 50th wedding anniversary asked friends to make donations to the campaign in their name in lieu of presents. Almost \$2000 has been received from this one source so far!

You may wish to sponsor a particular building project such as a new roof or the electrical, plumbing, or climate control systems; all are badly needed. In addition to those mentioned in earlier newsletters, several more businesses have recently responded generously in kind. They are listed in this newsletter and we encourage members to patronize them!

Thanks again and please act today!



FARMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY JUNE 23, 5:30 P.M.
THE COTTAGE
138 MAIN STREET

Join your fellow members to celebrate an eventful year for the Society on the site of our new home. Officers and Board Members will be elected. We hope to introduce - and to hear from - the architectural historian and garden/landscape designer who will serve as consultants for the restoration of the Gridley-Case Cottages and grounds.

Food and Drink! Do Come.

HAVE YOU MEMORIES OF THE COTTAGES?

Our knowledge of the histories of the Cottages at 138 and 140 Main is sketchy. Perhaps our readers can fill in gaps in the 20th century by sharing memories from their own lifetimes. Have you memories of people who lived in the cottages, of any events which took place there, and of the appearance of the gardens? Please write these memories down. Include anecdotes or stories you heard, even if second-hand. Mail to the Society at P. O. Box 1645, attention Peg Yung. Don't want to write? We should be able to find volunteers who will take down this information in interviews. Call the Society at 678-1645 and leave a message.



MANY THANKS FOR SERVICES DONATED

Public spirited enterprises deserve our patronage as well as our thanks. In addition to services and materials donated before and listed in an earlier issue are the following providers.

Burhoe Landscaping

334 Plainville Avenue,
Unionville, CT
673-9306

A truckload of mulch

Safe Home Security

90 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT 06082
888-867-3070

Donated and installed security and fire safety systems

Ann Howard Caterers

Brick Walk Lane, Farmington, CT
678-9486

Donated food for large reception

Wilber Anderson, WLA Masonry

New Britain Phone 224-7234

In addition to fireplace and foundation work acknowledged before, foundation repair at 140 Main (the cottage next door).

Town of Farmington

Supplied a truck to haul away 65 years of brush cleared from rear of property

Richard Stockman of R.D.S. Enterprises

36 South Street, Bristol, CT 06010
589-1880

Hours of time video taping Architectural Historian at work

FHS CELEBRATES THE DUBE GIFT FOR THE OLD STONE SCHOOLHOUSE

Mr. Robert H. Dube, age 91, has donated to the Society almost an acre of valuable land which abuts the Schoolhouse property on the east side. This beautiful tract will enhance the setting for our treasured building and forever protect it against encroaching development. The land includes a stream and is surrounded by a stone wall built by Mr. Dube's grandfather when he cleared it in the last century. Farmington Boy Scouts, under the leadership of Mike Chicchetti, chair of the Schoolhouse Committee, will help clear and improve the property.



MUSIC AT THE OLD STONE SCHOOLHOUSE

Mr. Dube's mother Grace Brown, and her two sisters Maine and Lill Brown attended the Old Stone Schoolhouse.

In April the Old Stone Schoolhouse was the setting for Spring Revels, a gathering of student musicians dedicated to the joy of singing and the preservation of madrigals and other music. Under the inspired direction of Andrew Mayo, Music Teacher, West District School, groups from West District School, Farmington High School and the Hartford Conservatory gathered to sing together.

Mr. Mayo wrote a thank-you letter, though surely the present caretakers and the shades of those who have used the building in the past, might well have thanked him.

He wrote, "After some welcoming remarks from Ron Bernard and a brief historical presentation from Harriet Margolis, we opened the celebration with all of us singing together, performing a very old round called Music Alone Shall Live. Then the Hartford Conservatory Madrigal Society performed two pieces, including a very traditional madrigal called Spring Returns. Then the Red Ribbon Revelers, the group from West District School, performed two great pieces, much to the delight of the adults. The Farmington High School Madrigal Group performed three songs, one of which was from memory and in Italian. That group was just astounding, and the hall was left ringing with their beautiful harmonies.

To end the evening, we all joined together in a final madrigal, entitled *All Ye Who Music Love*. You should have seen the looks of joy and wonder on the faces of the fifth graders, singing with the "big kids" ... Everyone was just delighted, from the parents to the students, including the high school kids who were supposed to be taking a night off from intense rehearsal for their Spring musical. It was touching to watch music move people of all ages and of all stations in life. Thank you so much for giving us such a perfect place to join together in song."

Thank you, Mr. Mayo! The Society welcomes such community use of the building.



RESEARCH HISTORIAN STUDIES COTTAGES

by Charlie Leach

Anne Grady has a Boston University Master's degree in historic preservation, and 20 years field experience in the interpretation of 17th and 18th century structures. She is a senior staff member at the distinguished Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, headquartered in the Harrison Grey Otis house in Boston. She came to Farmington on May 25-26 to study the Gridley-Case Cottages in order to guide the Historical Society in their conservation and conversion efforts. Anne's previous architectural history studies include the Massachusetts State House and Boston's Old South Meeting House. She also brings to her work years of rigorous research in infectious disease at Yale's School of Medicine.

Anne entered the cottages armed with a tool kit of gloves, tapes, lights and "surgical" tools. Many hours later, she emerged covered with cobwebs and dust, brimming with data about the little houses. She then led a videotaped tour on which Ron Bernard and the author were enthusiastic students.

Her principal findings are that the houses are indeed of historical value and interest, and that they appear to date from approximately 1800. She has identified structural elements which give clues to the houses' evolution and function. As a pleasant surprise, she found that many portions of interior finish, floors, hardware, and windows appeared to be either original or contemporaneous with the houses' construction.

BLACK HISTORY EXHIBIT CONTINUES TRAVELS

by Charlie Leach

The Farmington Historical Society's prizewinning exhibit "Speaking for Ourselves" continues to please new audiences in the Hartford area. It has moved from the Farmington schools to the Plainville Library to Tunxis Community College over the past months. It is now at Capital Community and Technical College, where the 22-panel display of Farmington's African-American history has excited the interest of a diverse urban audience and of the State Board of Education which shares the Woodland Street building. In July, the exhibit will move to the Peck Library in Berlin. Interest was so great at Tunxis that they will hang the exhibit again for the opening of the College in September. The exhibit is tenderly packed by Farmington art teacher Roxanne Frenette in 22 plastic garbage bags and transported in her van. Designer Lisa Johnson follows with a repair kit for dings and scratches - of which there have been remarkably few. Good work, and congratulations to the FHS!



FHS TO WELCOME VISITORS FROM THROUGHOUT THE NATION

The Amistad and Underground Railroad sites in Farmington continue to attract visitors.

Groups from Connecticut apply regularly for tours. Moreover, docents from the Farmington Historical Society, under the leadership of Peg Yung, more and more frequently conduct tours for visitors from distant areas.

Already scheduled for the coming months are the following:

- On June 6 members of the National Association of Black Journalists will visit.



- On September 17, forty members of the Gospel Choir of Martin Luther King's church in Atlanta will arrive.
- On September 18, fifty members of the Gospel Choir from the Dexter Street King Church in Montgomery, Alabama, will tour the Amistad and Underground Railroad sites.
- Descendants of Tunxis Indians plan a trip to Farmington on June 15. Canton, Ct. historian Cynthia Griggs, who is writing a history of the Tunxis Indians, has helped arrange a trip by 49 native Americans from Wisconsin and Minnesota. They will hear a presentation in the Meeting House by Griggs and Peg Yung, visit Farmington sites frequented by their ancestors, and enjoy a luncheon at the Porter Memorial presented by Griggs and the Farmington Historical Society.

Among those coming are descendants of the Adams, Robbins, Wimpey, Mossock, Curricum, Charles and Occum families. The Indian Burial ground, in the West District, has both a Wimpey and Mossock stone in place.

Interaction between the Tunxis and the occupying whites was frequent and often amicable. Highlights of that history include the appointment, by Indian request, on September 17, 1688, of Tunxis chiefs Shum and Wawawis by the Farmington Council. That meeting of the Council was held in the home of John Wadsworth. The red house at 154 Main Street, which houses the Day-Lewis Museum of Indian Artifacts, was built by the Curricum family in 1750 on the Indian Reservation in the West District. Samson Occum, Native American Chief, preached in the Congregational Church June 9, 1773, at the invitation of the Rev. Timothy Pitkin. Mention of this appearance can be found in Occum's diary at the Connecticut State Library. When the Old Stone School House (also a FHS museum) opened in 1790, half the school population was Native American.

There can be no more poignant reminder of the presence and departure of our Native American predecessors than the poem engraved on a brown stone obelisk in Riverside Cemetery, overlooking the meadows. These were the meadows where the Tunxis planted their gardens; the obelisk was erected on the site of their ancient burial ground. Here Hartford poet Lydia Sigourney, writing in 1840 when the only threat from Native Americans in Connecticut was perhaps a silent rebuke, could voice the regret just beginning to trouble the consciousness of the occupiers.

Chieftains of a vanished race

In your ancient burial place

By your father's ashes blest

Now in peace securely rest.

Since on life you looked your last

Changes o'er your land have passed

Strangers came with iron sway

And your tribes have passed away.

But your fate shall cherished be

In the stranger's memory

Virtue long her watch shall keep

Where the red man's ashes sleep.

Yet another visitor has been drawn to Farmington by our collection of Indian artifacts. On May 11, Alex Hazelchuck from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Texas, visited the Day-Lewis Museum at 154 Main St. The collection of objects found on the site or nearby belongs to Yale and is cared for and exhibited by the FHS. (It can be viewed Wednesday afternoons, 2 - 4 pm or by appointment.) Over 10,000 years of occupation by Native Americans are represented by excellent flaking on chert and jasper brought in from New York and Maine as well as by artifacts made from local quartz, shale, sandstone, trap rock, slate, and soap stone. Hazelchuck noted especially the Markovitch and Schramma collections, donated to the Society in the 1980s and 1990s, which he said are valuable for their excellent craftsmanship and association with local Native Americans.

Note: FHS Board Member and Town Historian Jean Johnson has prepared an account of the relationships among white settlers and Native Americans which will appear in the fall News Letter.

AND THE ANSWERS ARE...

(supplied by an unimpeachable source: Carol Leonard)

For all of you history students who've been waiting to grade yourselves on the Farmington History Quiz published in the spring newsletter, here are the official answers.

1. Who were the seven pillars?

The organizers of the First Church of Christ, who signed their names for this purpose on October 13, 1652. They were Roger Newton (the first minister), Stephen Hart, Thomas J. Judd, John Bronson, John Cowles, Thomas Thomson and Robert Porter. A map on page 20 of Bickford's Farmington in Connecticut will enable you to locate their homes in a walk around the village.

2. Can you name 5 founding families of Farmington?

Lots of familiar names and some not so well known, they included John Steele, William Goodwin, Deacon Andrew Warner, Stephen Hart, William Lewis, Roger Newton, Matthew Webster, Thomas Barnes, John Brownson, George Ovice (Orvis), Thomas Porter, John Warner, Thomas Demon (Deming), John Cole (Cowles), Deacon Thomas Judd, Thomas Upson, Deacon Isaac Moore, John Lomes (Loomis) and William Hitchcock

3. Where did the Tunxis Indians move to from Farmington?

First, rather briefly to Stockbridge, MA, then to Oneida, NY, finally to the area of Green Bay, WI.

4. Who was Sarah Porter's father and what did he do? And her brother?

Sarah's father, the Rev. Noah Porter, was minister of First Church from 1806 to 1866, the first "local boy" to be called to the Farmington pulpit. The Porters had seven children, all of whom distinguished themselves as teachers or clergy; best known is Noah, who became president of Yale College.

5. What famous furniture maker is buried in Riverside Cemetery? What playwright?

The furniture maker is Lambert Hitchcock, whose original furniture factory was located in Unionville. The playwright is Winchell Smith, onetime owner of the Gridley-Case cottages.

6. Can you name 3 manufacturing industries in Unionville?

Once again, you have a lengthy list from which to choose. Platner & Porter, Charles House, Inc. Fisk Rub-

ber Co., Case Manufacturing Co., Upson Nut Co., Pioneer Steel Ball, H.C. Hart Mfg., American Wire Washer Co., American Plough Co., Cowles Paper Co., Ditson Pond & Co., Crum Saws, B.J. Broadbent & Sons. (a not all-inclusive list)

7. What distinguished restaurant is located in a former streetcar barn? In an ancient mill?

Apricots in the streetcar barn; The Grist Mill in the venerable Grist Mill at the end of Mill Lane (also once owned by Winchell Smith).

8. What was the original name of Unionville?

"Langdon's Quarters" for its most prominent landowner.

9. Name three Underground Railroad hiding places in Farmington Village.

Four of the best known include: 1 Mountain Spring Rd. (formerly faced Farmington Avenue), 27 Main Street, 66 Main Street and 127 Main Street.

10. Which park is named for a hero of the 1955 flood and what did he do?

Yodkins-Morin Memorial Park, on the river in Unionville, honors police officers Charles Yodkins and Joseph Morin who drowned while rescuing people whose homes had been washed away.

11. Where can you find traces of the Farmington Canal?

While Pitkin Basin is long gone, its location is easily identifiable at 128 Garden Street. Remains of the canal bed and towpath are visible to varying degrees west of Garden Street near the river, and ruins of the aqueduct can be seen on the Land Trust property on Waterville Road.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chair Joanne Lawson reports the following additions:

Farmington

Dr. and Mrs. Arnold Amstutz
Philip Bankwitz
Deanne Born/Dennis Golbesky
Dr. and Mrs. John Cavo, Jr.
Richard and Sally D'Alessandro
George and Janet Duborg
Gloria and Stephen Flis
Russell and Kate Fisher,
Jean Filer
Geraldine Harrington

Victoria and Timothy Price
Richard Sheldon
Robert and Marion Slater
Mary and Robert Villanova

Avon

Don Kreutzer

Burlington

Robert Fuoco

Unionville

Donna Striebel

*Don't forget
to renew
your
membership!
Due now.*

PROFITABLE TAG SALE & FOURTH ANNUAL AUCTION SET FOR OCTOBER

The Board and members continue to find opportunities to raise money to meet Society expenses. Those who worked to make the Spring Tag Sale a success are too numerous to mention but not too numerous to thank. Some donated hours and hours of time and their efforts are very much appreciated.. Total take: \$2100! We'll do it again next year.

More work will be required in the fall when we sponsor our fourth Annual Antiques Auction. Please think of what you have that you might donate or consign to that Auction. More information will appear in the fall Newsletter.

FHS Newsletter:

Ann Reed, Editor

Cynthia Cooper, Graphics

Contributors include Peg Yung


THE FARMINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

138 MAIN STREET
THE COTTAGE

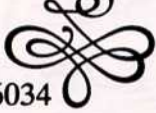
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 5:30 P.M.

Annual Meeting

FARMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 1997

THE FARMINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1645
Farmington, CT 06034 

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Remember to renew your membership soon.