PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

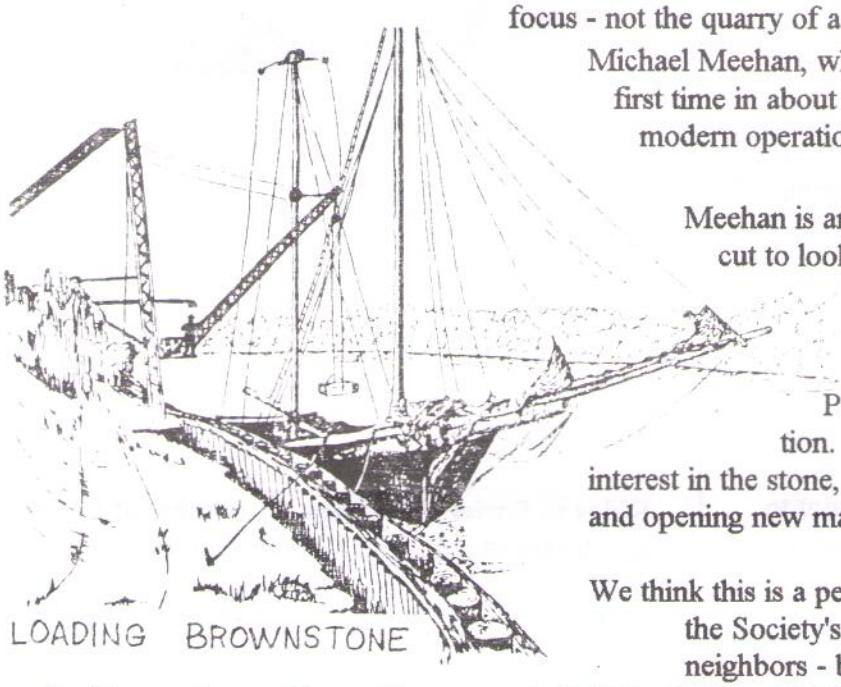
P.O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

FALL, 1996 NEWSLETTER

Celebrate Portland's Past!

AT OUR OCTOBER 22nd MEETING

This evening we remind ourselves how unique the Town's past has been and how important the Society's charge is to collect, publicize and preserve it. Brownstone, probably Portland's most famous product, is the program's focus - not the quarry of a hundred years ago, but its modern resurgence. Michael Meehan, who is quarrying brownstone in Portland for the first time in about 60 years, will talk about and show slides of his modern operation.



LOADING BROWNSTONE

Meehan is an exploration geologist who came to Connecticut to look for opportunities in mineral development and small scale quarrying. Through his efforts here, he is providing the stone for the restoration of buildings constructed when the Portland quarries were at the height of production. Publicity about the restorations is renewing interest in the stone, educating contemporary architects to its value, and opening new markets.

We think this is a perfect occasion to be reminded of the value of the Society's work. Spread the word among friends and neighbors - bring them to the meeting, or send their names and addresses to me, Sharon Bergman, c/o P.H.S., PO Box 98, Portland, or telephone me at 342-4065.

In early November we will be mailing the usual membership letter, and would like lots of residents names who you think would like to keep Portland's history alive and visible. Let me know who they are so that we include them in our mailing.

ANNUAL MEETING - POTLUCK - *Nov. 12*

As usual Annual Meeting will be at the Hemlock Grange on Sage Hollow Road. The call is for 6 PM, buffet to begin at 6:30. Please bring a main dish for 6 to 8 and your plates, cups and cutlery. The Board will provide salad, bread, beverage and dessert.

The business of the evening will be to elect new officers, and for members to give any direction to them that you wish for the next year.

John Dillon will introduce the 1997 HERITAGE CALENDAR and give us the "story behind the stories".

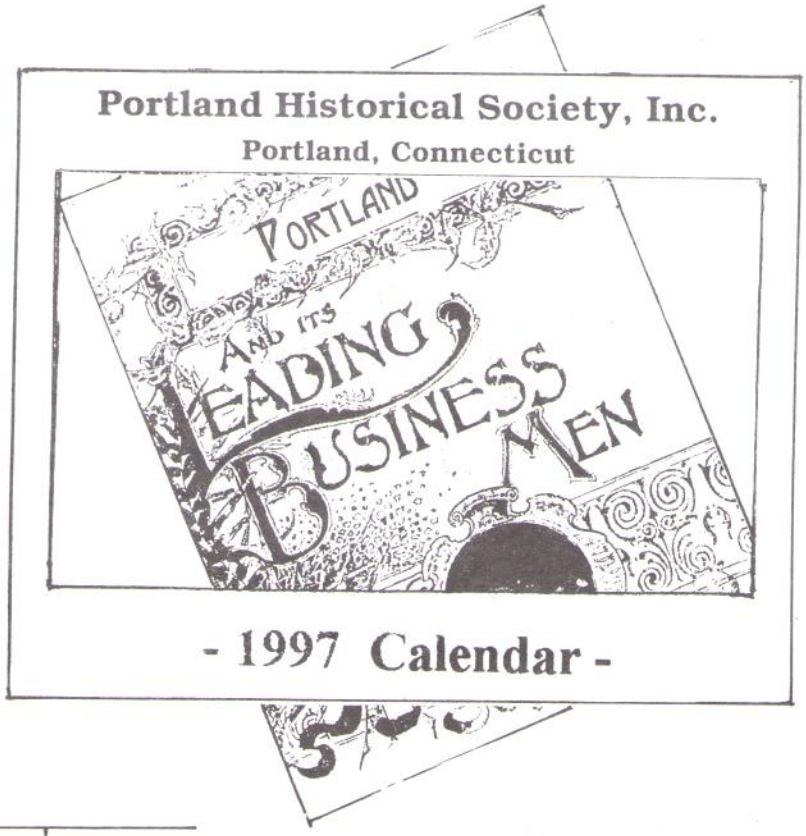
WORLD WAR II HONOR ROLL

We promised that the Honor Roll prepared for the Memorial Day Parade would be exhibited in the Mary Flood Room of the Library in July. Not possible at that time - but it will be there in November.

HERITAGE CALENDAR 1997 - *John Dillon*

November is calendar launching month. Each year's edition is unique, exploring a new theme. The 1997 Calendar celebrates Portland Businesses and their founders, with "before and after" photos. We were inspired by a booklet printed at the end of the last century about Portland's leading businessmen. We researched Portland contemporary businesses, focusing on those which are several generations removed from their founding. The Calendar Committee interviewed, and collected photos from thirteen businesses. These, with present day pictures, emphasize the Town's interesting historic continuity.

After Annual Meeting, the new calendars will be available as usual at the Town Hall, Library and several local stores. More information will be available in the membership letter and the newspapers.



HISTORIC SITES & BUILDINGS
- Jim Sarbaugh

Civil War Monument - An arthritic old Civil War Soldier who can't go south for the winter is about to do the next best thing - wrap up well. The Bartlett and Main Street statue will be roofed over and draped with plastic for the winter, under the direction of Harold C. Vogel, a Virginia sculptor and stone restorer who will start restoration of the damaged brownstone in the spring. The wrapping will protect against the winter snows and dry it out. By next fall, the old gentleman should be ready for another century.

Town Buildings Renovation - The lengthy, careful analysis and planning for the Central School renovation is nearly complete. After the bidding process, the actual construction work should begin - probably in early spring - with completion planned for November, 1997. Town Hall, a more complex restoration, is expected to take an additional year and a half, with occupation scheduled for March, 1999.

EASY RIDING

Rides to Society Meetings - A number of us don't like driving at night and therefore miss good Society programs. Others don't mind night driving. Regina Woltmann is organizing a drive-matching program. If you would like a ride to a Society meeting, or wish to offer a ride, please leave your number on Regina's answering machine, 342-3092.

TOWN FESTIVAL BOOTH

The Society's booth at the Town Festival was a fiscal success despite the gloomy day. $600 was raised from the sale of towels, pie plates, picture pads, and collector calendars. Regina and Charles Woltmann, Martha Johnson, Dorothy Ahlberg, Pat Csere and Eleanor Crowther took turns as our successful sales team.

HELP WANTED!

GENEALOGY - About once a month the Society receives a request from someone researching his family who has traced an ancestor to Portland. Sometimes the answer requires only a call to the Town Clerk, but if providing the answer is more involved, rather than trying to answer the question in depth, we reply with possible resources that can be consulted; such as, the Godfrey, the Ct. State Library and the Ct. Historical Society. Is there someone interested in genealogy who would be willing to respond to these requests? Call Pat Csere, 342-2168.

MUSEUM - ***Pat Csere***

An interesting paper doll exhibit has been arranged by Vivian Dower in the Museum Room this month. Drawn from a private collection, the exhibit features dolls and paper doll books from the 1920's and 30's. Those of us who enjoyed them in our childhood probably didn't know that they originated as early as the 1400's as adult amusement, were produced for children in the 1700's, and later, as fashion sales gimmicks and advertising premiums. In fact, if you look hard, they are still available. (But, if you plan collecting rather than buying for pleasure, look for pre-1960 dolls, the experts say.)

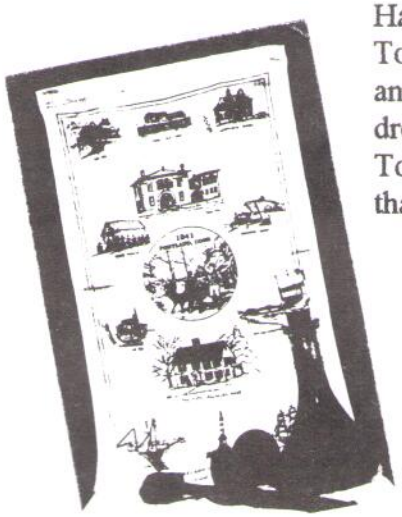
The Museum Room is open every Saturday morning from 10 to noon. Stop in to see if any of your old doll friends are there!

THOMAS BARROWS GIFT

In addition to a generous donation, the late Thomas Barrows of Main Street left the following interesting Portland Artifacts to the Society from his personal collection. The memorabilia are representative of an active business and social scene long gone. They will enhance and amplify our present collection. As soon as they are available, a special viewing is planned.

1. March Drum - *St. Mary's Cub Scouts*
2. Hat Pins - *Portland Lodge*
3. Thermometer advertising *Strong & Hale Lumber*
4. Early Voting List
5. Framed 1913 Advertisement - *Waverly Theatre*
6. Hanging Brownstone Piece - *Shaler & Hall Quarry Co. 1844-1894*
7. Framed Marriage Certificate
8. Framed Photograph - *Portland Railroad Station*
9. Framed Price List - *From Quarries*
10. Framed - *Rules & Regulations of the Quarries*
11. Framed Picture - *Central School*
12. Quantity of Portland Photos and Papers
13. Early Year Books
14. Portland Banner
15. Thermometers - *New Bridge Dairy (2)*
16. Milk Bottles (2) & Mugs (5) - *Portland Dairy*
17. Coasters - *Prout's Dairy*
18. Apron - *Strong & Hale Lumber*
19. Plate - *Methodist Church*
20. Quarry Pictures (2)
21. School Photo - *Portland Truck & Tractor*
22. Framed Sign - *The Little Shop*
23. Large Oak Framed Certificate - *September, 1904*
24. Large Oak Framed Engraving - *Ct. Steam Brown Stone Co.*

DISH DRYING MADE FESTIVE



Have you seen the new Historical Society towel? Twelve line drawings surrounding the Town Seal in burgundy ink on beige linen. A very handsome gift (price $6) for yourself and all the daughters and sons. Rebecca Gildersleeve Robinson designed the towel (and drew the Callander house) using Carolyn Johnson's drawings and Philip Gildersleeve's Town Seal. Now Martha Johnson (342-1388) and Lois Berndtson (342-3804) will see that you are supplied.

Boutique Historique

(Eleanor Crowther - 342-2907)

8-Inch, Blue-gray, Stoneware deep-dish Pie Plates, microsafe - Incised ***"Portland-1841"*** ***$25.***

Portland Scenic Dish Towels (342-1388). . . . ***$ 6.***

Portland Picture Note Pads (4-1/4x7"), 50 pgs., 5-repeating designs . . . . . ***$ 3.***

Meshomasic Forest Video (342-0303) ***$10.***

P.H.S. Collector Calendars (not all years) . . . ***$ 5.***

P.H.S. OFFICERS

President
Eleanor Crowther

Vice-President
Christine Sullivan

Secretary
Ruth Freeburg

Treasurer
Charles Woltmann

Directors
Richard Gildersleeve
Walter Dower
Donald Kelsey

Finance Directors
Daniel Crowther
James Elder
Donald Goodrich

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE INTERESTING FALL COMING ATTRACTIONS! - *Regina Woltmann, 342-3092*

October 22: ***"Quarrying in Portland"*** - Michael Meehan discusses his present day operations in the Portland brownstone quarries. 7:30 PM.

November 12: *ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK SUPPER* - Introduction to and background of the Society's ***1997 HERITAGE CALENDAR.*** **Meeting to be held at the Grange Hall, Sage Hollow Road, 6 PM.**

December 10: ***"Snow Dome Collectibles"*** - Phil Blumenbrantz shares his collection of snow domes and discusses his hobby, **at SENIOR CENTER, 7:30 PM**

The Society meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, (except in holiday months), in the Mary Flood Room of the Portland Library at 7:30 PM, unless otherwise indicated. The Museum Room at the Library is open Saturday mornings from 10 to noon, and by appointment - 342-2168.

HELP WANTED - STIMULATING POSITION AVAILABLE!

(All Society positions are Income Tax EXEMPT!)

PROGRAMS - We are sorry to announce that Regina Woltmann, Program Chairman, who has entertained and informed us for the past four years with a stimulating selection of speakers, has decided to change her focus to other work for the Society. But, in her usual way, she is leaving an ordered process to simplify the job for her successor - all programs in place through April, 1997; forms for confirming speakers; files of program ideas; and, consultation service on call. The job requires telephoning potential speakers, and sending out confirmations. Would you enjoy doing this yourself, or as part of a committee? Call Eleanor, 342-2907, or Regina, 342-3092.

* * * *

NEWSLETTER - ***Phyllis and Bill Frisbie***

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